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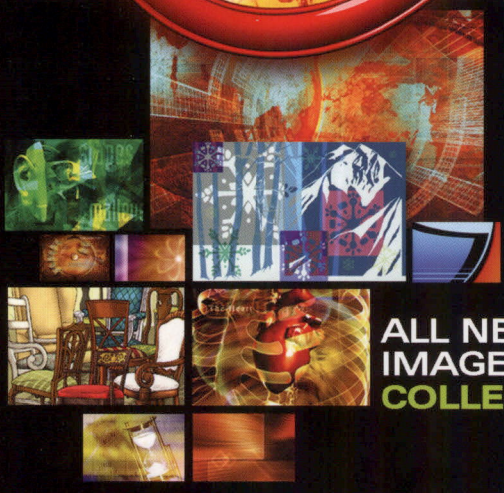

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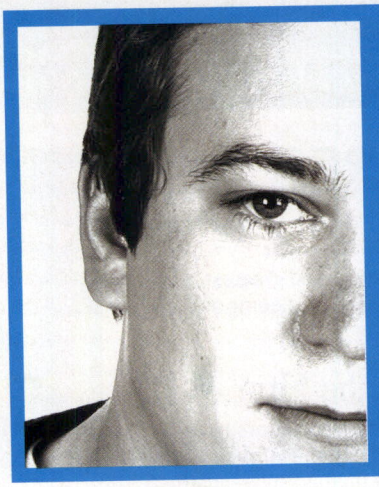
Welcome



The term 'filters and effects' probably strikes fear into your heart – after all, professional illustrators don't use filters, they do everything by hand, right? Well, partly. The trick with *Photoshop* filters is to experiment with their undeniable power until you have an effect that can be used as part of your work. No one wants to see an image with a simple Twirl filter applied, for example, but as part of an illustration, in the right context, filters are incredibly useful.

Over the course of this issue, you'll discover how to create some truly amazing imagery with even better effects – combining filters with *Photoshop*'s other tools. You'll pick up techniques on creating stunning comic-book style art, decaying effects, and halftone imagery of the past. You'll also discover how to blend 35mm and digital imagery using noise, and how to create your own filters for truly customised effects. Plus, there's an exclusive interview with the prolific Me Company – starting on page 38. Until next time.

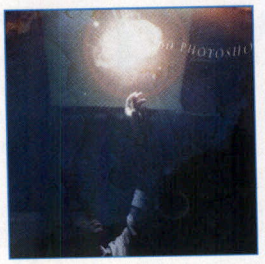
Rob Carney, Associate Editor
rob.carney@futurenet.co.uk

Contributing creatives

COVER IMAGE
Me Company

Paul White set up Me Company nearly 20 years ago, and since then the company has developed into one of the biggest names in digital art, with clients such as Kenzo, Nike and Ford. Read our exclusive interview with the agency on page 38...

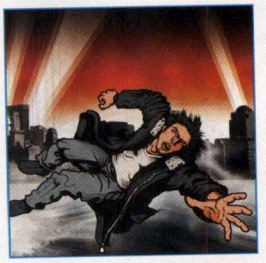
[w] www.mecompany.com



Nessim Higson

Nessim Higson is a creative based in Birmingham, USA, who believes in the convergence of mediums within design. Nessim illustrated our 60 tips feature, beginning on page 50.

[w] www.iamalwayshungry.com



Adi Gilbert

Adi Gilbert formed 99SECONDS Media while working for agencies in London. He recently fled the rat race and relocated to Bristol, lured by its many skate parks, cider dens and thriving art scene.

[w] www.99seconds.com

Jo Wong

Illustrator Jo Wong creates images that are colourful, lively and ironic, using a mixture of drawing, photography and found ephemera. See her fantastic illustration work on page 90.

[w] www.joannewong.co.uk

Tim Seelig

Tim Seelig is a freelance illustrator, designer and photographer. He recently completed some concepts for Miramax Films and wrote our decay effects tutorial on page 76.

[w] www.debutart.com

Tell us what topics you'd like to see covered in-depth in *Computer Arts Projects*. Contact us on:
[e] rob.carney@futurenet.co.uk

We're always on the lookout for new artists as well as established creatives – so if you're interested in contributing to the magazine, please send some examples of your work to **[e] johann.chan@futurenet.co.uk**

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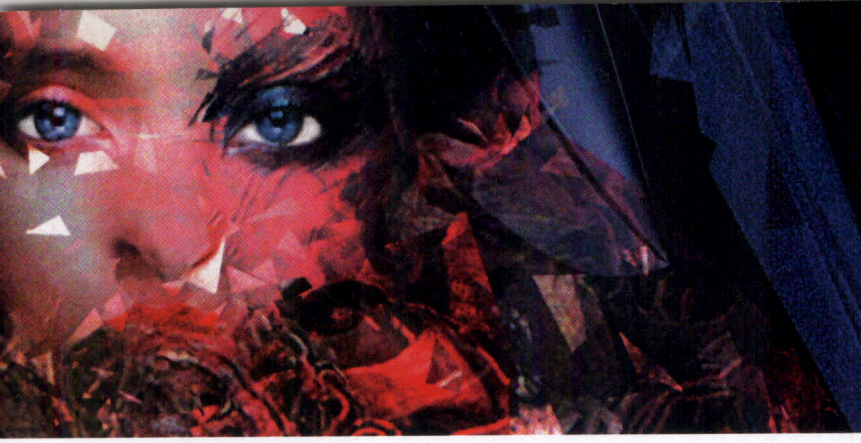
This *Photoshop* artist has a fascination with space and the unpredictable. Parts of her amazing images happen by accident, "I love it when the program crashes and you get the strangest stuff happening," says Fusako Akimoto



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TUTORIALS

Brush effects in Photoshop CS 26
Create a stunning comic-book illustration using *Photoshop* brushes in combination with a variety of filters

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Everything you need to know to create fantastic packaging – see page 42.
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dazzling work from three special effects artists

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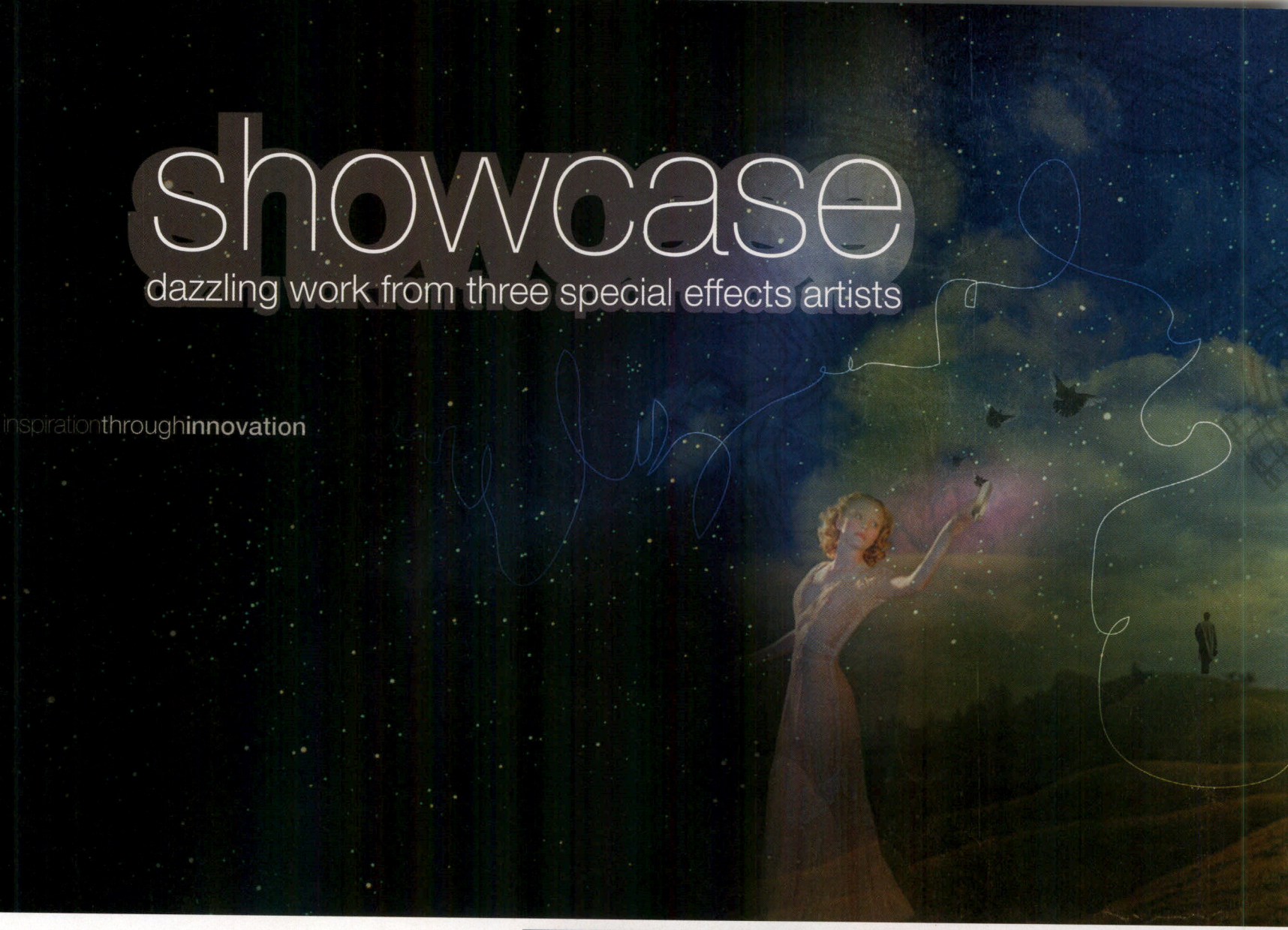

Nessim Higson

Years practising:
Approximately seven years.

Mission Statement:
Ultimately, I'd like to make an impact on people's lives – if I can touch a person in some way or other with something I've created, even if it's for the briefest instant. If that impact evokes a positive effect, then perhaps I have done something. I believe that design holds an enormous amount of power, which so many people lose sight of.

Style achieved with filters and effects:
This may sound strange, but I don't want people to tell I use filters and effects. I want the work to feel as fresh, natural, and real as possible. I try to bring a lot of outside elements into my work through scans and photographs – things that did not originate on the computer – and then use the machine to help transform those elements into something more powerful.

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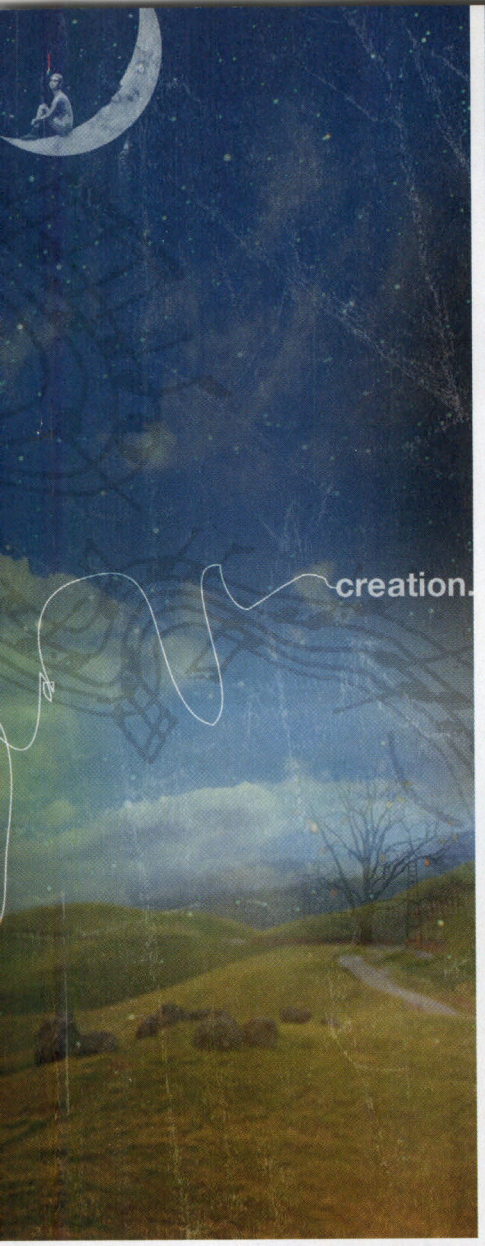
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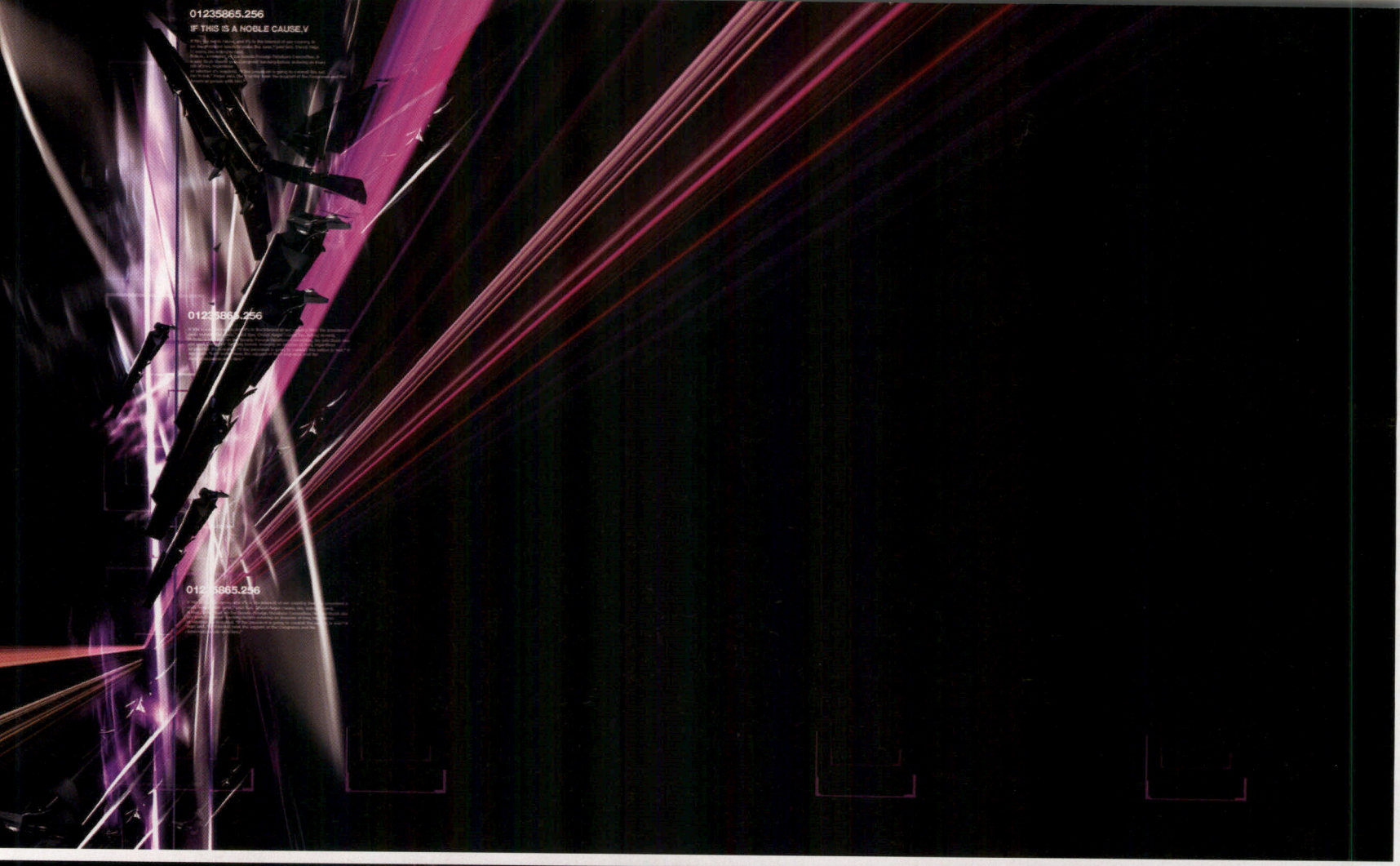
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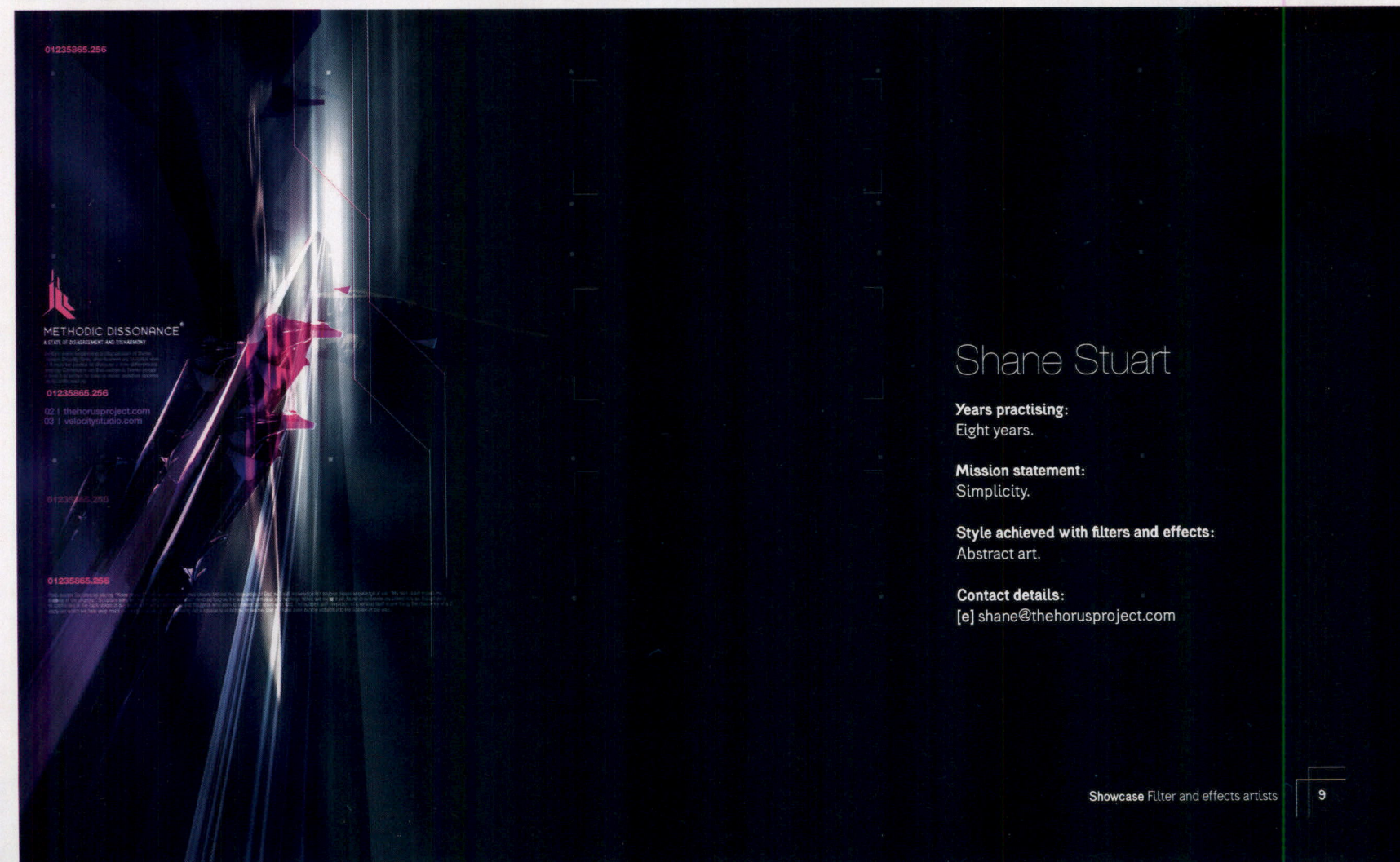
showcase

dazzling work from three special effects artists

believe.
IF THIS IS A NOBLE CAUSE, AND IT'S IN THE INTEREST OF OUR COUNTRY, 100
If this is a noble cause, and it's in the interest of our country, then the president needs to make the case," said Sen. Chuck Hagel (news, bio, voting record), R-Neb., a member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said Bush should seek Congress' backing before ordering an invasion of Iraq, regardless of whether it's required. "If the president is going to commit this nation to war," Hagel said, "he'd better have the support of the Congress and the American people with him."



Shane Stuart

Years practising:
Eight years.

Mission statement:
Simplicity.

Style achieved with filters and effects:
Abstract art.

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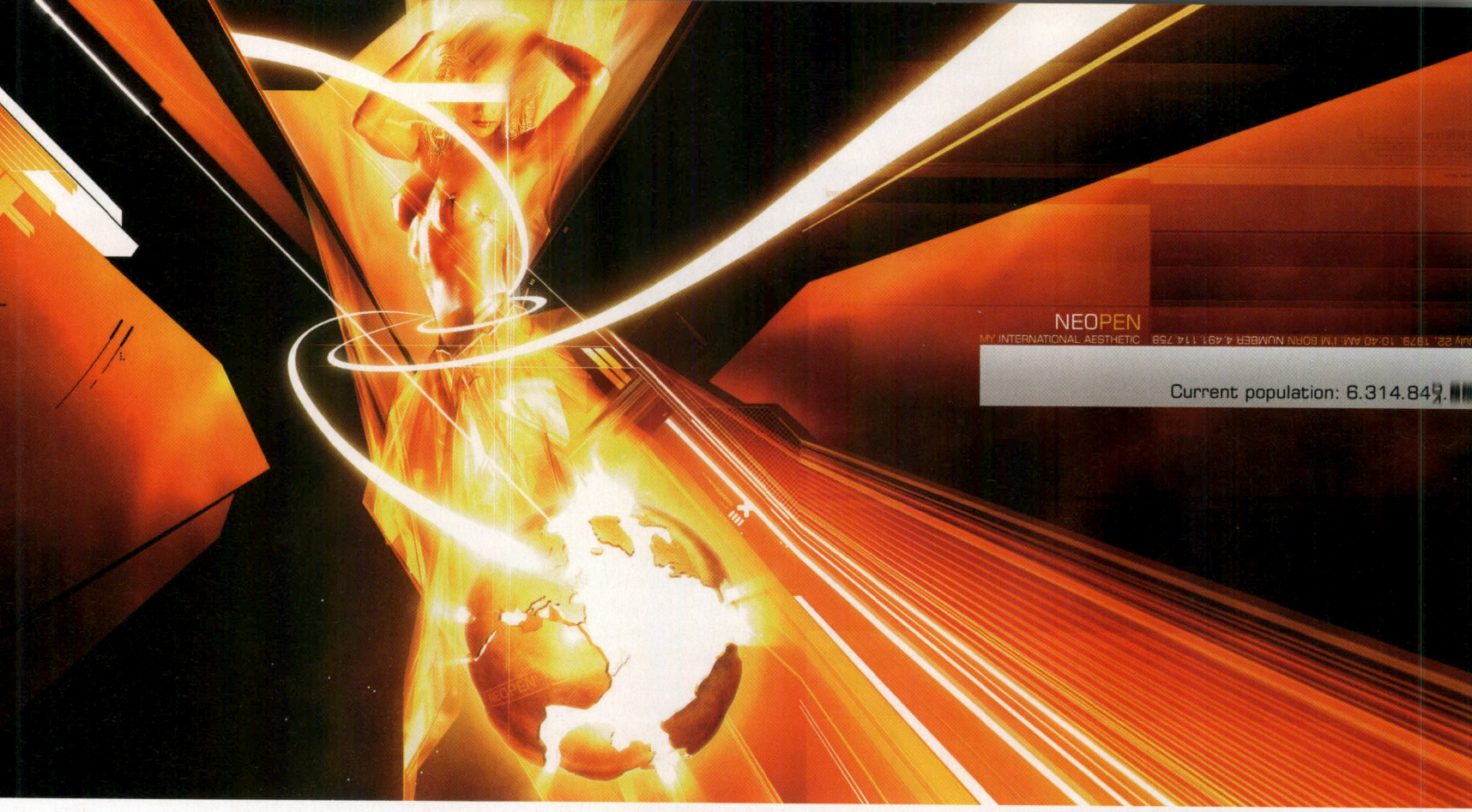

Andre Nicolas

Years practising:
Six years in graphic and website design, but I've been enjoying graphics since I was six!

Mission statement:
My background is mainly in graffiti culture, but digital culture is extremely rich and I'm fascinated by a lot of artists from various backgrounds. I love working with the smallest details, and so the work of photorealistic artists has always been a big source of inspiration for me. My goal is to build subjective images, high in colours and emotion, definitely abstract but with a taste of realism – a sort of fantasy graffiti art. Aside from that, I'm interested in using more organic elements and characters in my images, keeping that abstract touch but using photographs and/or illustrations.

Style achieved with filters and effects:
I use a lot of filters and several effects in my compositions, but I only use basic filters. The basic ones are generally the best – it's more a question of choosing the right ones and deciding how to mix them. The style I try to achieve is photorealistic.

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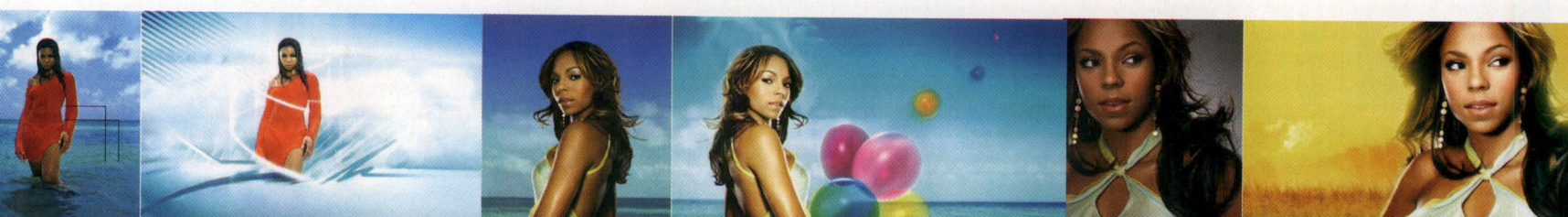

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Photography
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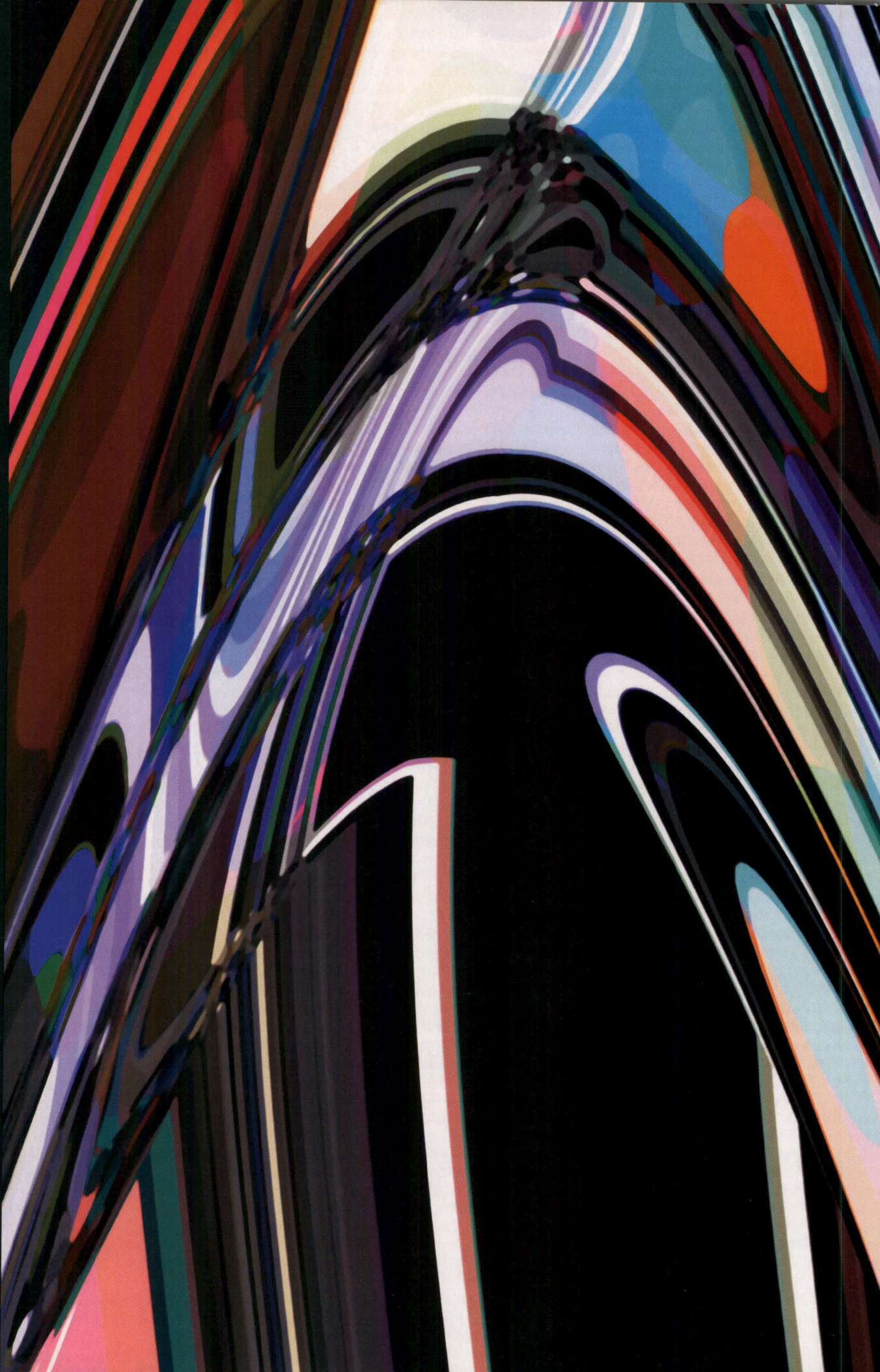


The birth of the waste painting

"Waste paintings evolved from the digital experiments we were doing in the search for something to stop us in our tracks," says Howard Wakefield who, as Design Director at Saville Associates, played a major role in the creation of the waste painting.

"We started experimenting because we didn't want to have to rely on photography or illustration to source an image," he says. The paintings rely on a secret combination of filtering techniques to recycle yesterday's pixels into entirely new artworks. As Howard explains, "The filters gave us infinite directions to explore..."

Settling on the Filter menu as the engine for their experiments, Howard and the creative team at Saville Associates began to develop their ideas. "I just noticed that the time on one of them is 3.07am." There was more than a little effort involved, but they had sensed something important and weren't about to let it slip away.

The development of the waste painting concept took some long hours, but that was unavoidable. "If you simply use a filter, it will look just like you've used a filter!" says Howard, echoing a common concern. "You need to work with them to move them away from what comes 'out of the tin'." It stands to reason really: "You cannot simply press a button to create something special."

(Don't fear) the filter

In recent years, *Photoshop* filters have developed a bit of an image problem. Now, thanks to the growing sophistication of the digital arts, the time may be ripe for their rehabilitation...

It wasn't always the case that the use of a *Photoshop* filter would earn you nothing but a knowing sneer from your audience. There was a time when the application of a *Kai's Power Tool* would actually cause onlookers' jaws to drop in honest amazement.

Nowadays, though, the majority of digital artists don't like to be caught hanging around anywhere near the Filter menu; it's become something of a guilty secret. But if they're pushed, most will admit to being regular filter users, usually starting with Gaussian Blur but often progressing to the harder stuff. The question that needs addressing is, can filters be used responsibly?

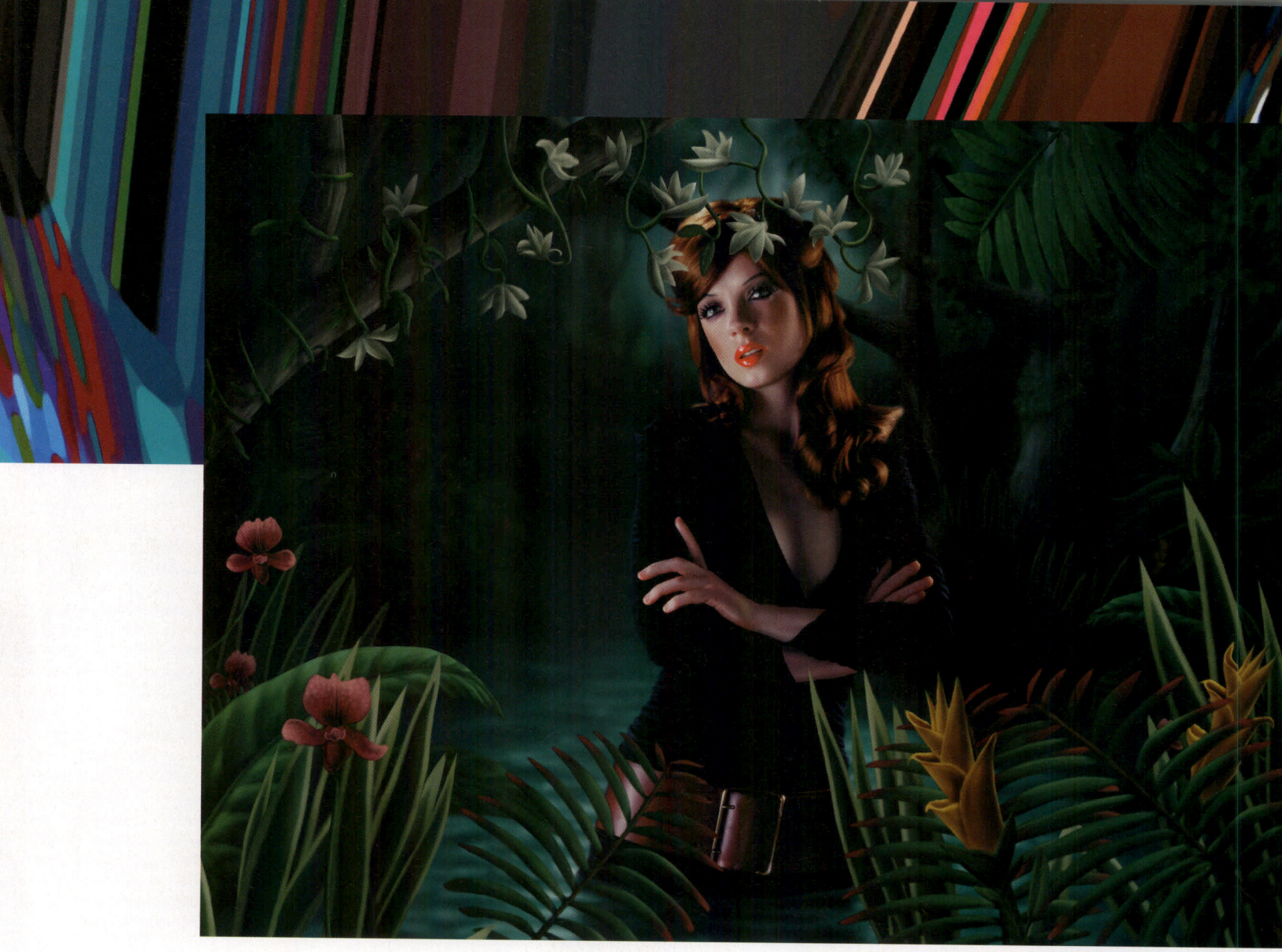
The problem

"When computers burst onto the scene, it was all about *Photoshop* filters and digital illustrations," says Henry Obasi, an illustrator who is proud of his practical skills, of his craft. Henry believes the early years of the digital revolution relied more heavily on the Filter menu: "It's like when artists discovered the Twirl filter years ago," he says, taking an example we're all familiar with. "Every illustration and its mother was twirled under the notion of 'Damn this shit looks cool. Look at what it does to the pictures!'."

"Lens Flare is classically overused. It has been since it came out really," says Antony Crossfield, Creative Director at London's top retouching studio Metro Imaging. "It's such an easy thing to do," he says, adding that the problem starts because, "People think it's a quick way to improve an image." This belief is subject to erosion over time, says Antony: "There's just not enough variation – the more you see it, the easier it is to notice." Eventually, every time you see that Lens Flare you downgrade your opinion of the image that contains it, just because you know how it was done.

John McFaul identifies the root cause of the problem. "Among the students I teach, 50 per cent of them just want instant results," he says. In essence, it's the perfectly natural desire for a quick solution that leads to an incautious rush to the Filter menu.

"You need to take a bit more time," says John, who's own approach to digital illustration draws on traditional techniques and intuitions. "Take the chance to open doors on new things. Maybe even get away from the computer for a bit..." he advises. The reaction and subsequent move away from using *Photoshop* filters is understandable as ›



part of our growing digital sophistication. "It's about progress," says Henry.

Away from the computer

People were involved in disciplines such as photography, illustration and design long before the arrival of computers. In fact, the computer is still a relatively recent addition to the tools used for these disciplines. So much so that the digital world is just starting to make ground on the processes which analogue production invented.

> "Everything you do in *Photoshop* that changes an image is filtering" **Harald Heim**

John McFaul has a background in traditional media, and says: "Process is too important to me to readily accept a quick fix." His belief in the importance of process is echoed throughout the digital arts. "You've got to get your hands dirty," says Henry Obasi, going on to explain that you have to create images using inks, paints, oils or whatever you can find in order to truly appreciate the power that filters offer you as a graphic artist.

The right stuff

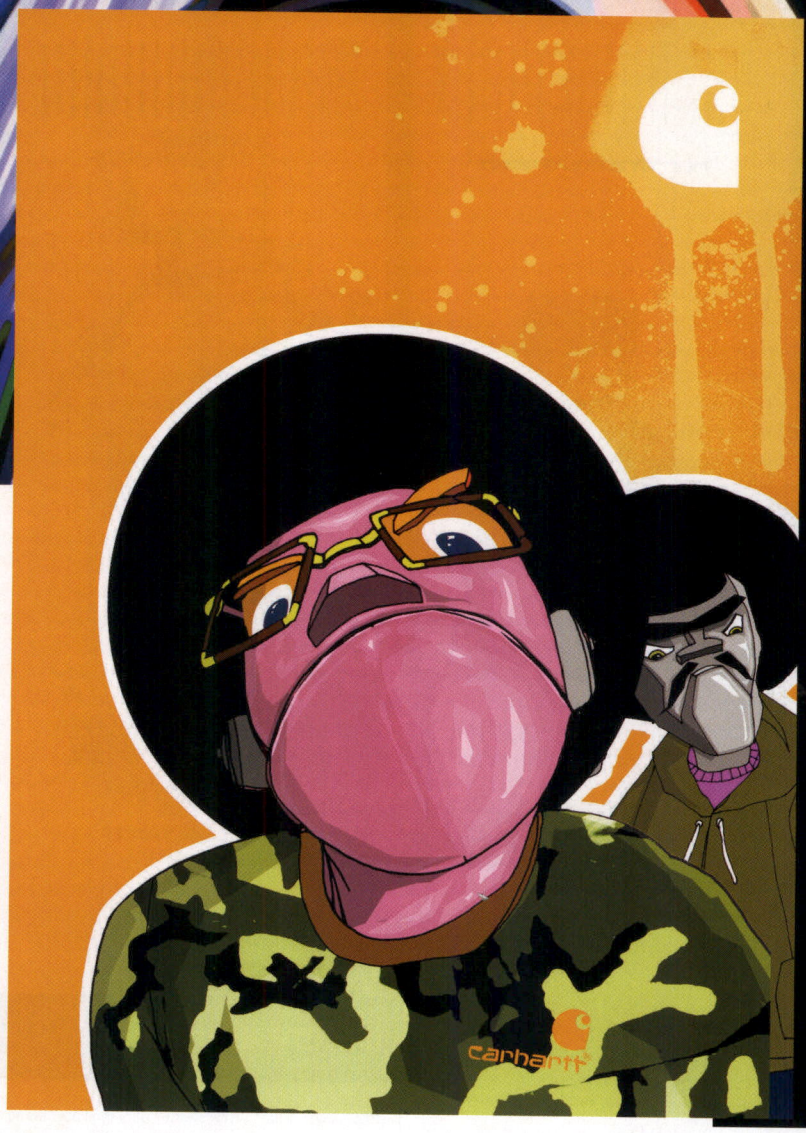
"In a broader sense, everything you do in *Photoshop* that changes an image is filtering," says Harald Heim of The Plugin Site. An obvious cheerleader for the Filter menu, Harald continues, "Taking that idea to its natural conclusion means purists would have to return to analog photography." Harald has a point, but what the 'purists' are advocating is a return to process, to craft.

"Illustration has been going from strength to strength in recent time," says John McFaul, who reckons the problem isn't just filters themselves but a general rise in illustration standards. He continues: "So if you're relying on filters then your work will look crude by comparison." The same is true in the world of high-end retouching. "Half the skill is to make it look like it wasn't used at all," says Antony Crossfield. "That's the guiding principle behind all the work we do."

This isn't a ban on filters, far from it: "They're a neat way to get things going quickly," says Antony. "But again, the main thing is to cover your tracks." The retouching business is clearly never going to endorse the heavy use of artistic filters but everything has its place: "There is potential in there – you just have to learn how to use them effectively."

Where and when

"The use of a filter is justified if it adds to the final image, but not when it's simply used with a 'because we can' attitude," so says



Terry Steeley, designer, photographer and *Photoshop* maestro. John McFaul takes a similar position when he says, "The idea is first and foremost; the thing to avoid is looking like you have a filter with some artwork attached."

It's no good using the filters as a substitute for creativity, but as part of a solution they could be the perfect tool. "You have to treat it as something that needs exploring. Don't let it dictate," says John. Antony Crossfield agrees, adding: "You can use them to get somewhere but not as an end in themselves."

Terry Steeley says, "Good use is seldom the standard use of the filters without additional refinements." Heeding this advice, the central task is to rein in the power of these effects so that they don't dominate the work they're in. This power was what made them so immediately attractive; it's also what made them so quickly familiar. Now it's what makes them difficult to rehabilitate.

Plug-in comeback

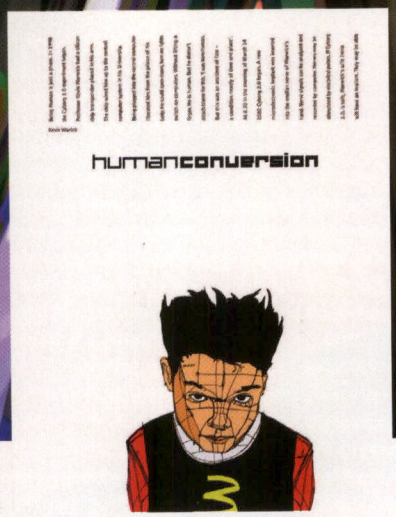
As the number and quality of new plug-ins continues to grow, could these give the Filter menu a new lease of life?

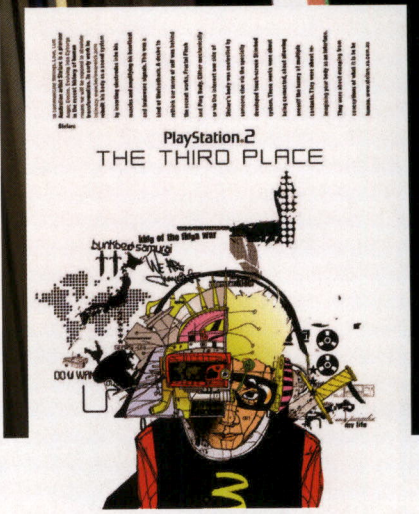
Harald Heim has been developing plug-ins since 1997, contributing to the steady stream of new software expanding the range of effects available to *Photoshop* users. "I would say that the golden age has just started," says Harald. "There are more than 200 companies and independent developers creating *Photoshop* plug-ins."

With new options coming on stream all the time, the problem of overexposure could be a thing of the past. "Filters are getting more sophisticated and plug-ins are getting more and more professional," says Harald. If he's right on this score then these new tools should be capable of the kind of subtlety that professional users insist upon. The overuse of obvious or 'crazy' filters did much to damage the reputation of the humble filter but, according to Harald, that's no longer a problem: "The experimental and weird plug-ins that were created in the 90s are more or less forgotten now." There could well be a renaissance on the way.

Far-left and right: Though filters are used in the work which Metro Imaging produces, they are never used as an end in themselves. "Half the skill is to make it look like it wasn't used. That's the guiding principle," says Creative Director Antony Crossfield.

Above-centre: "You have got to know about the craft of picture making," says illustrator Henry Obasi, who is convinced the problem with filters is often that they're too powerful. "I mean, you got to get your hands dirty creating images using inks, paints, oils and so on, in order to truly appreciate the power filters offer you."





Above, from left to right:

This charming little fellow was bottled by Metro Imaging, proving that even when the subject matter gets surreal, there's still no excuse for over-filtering.

"At the moment, there's a trend for advertising companies to commission less-obviously digitally produced work, so naturally the knock-on effect will be that less 'filtered' illustrations will be used," says Henry Obasi.

John McFaul worries that filters may hijack the creative process if used indiscriminately: "Process is very important to me," he explains. "I just don't want to accept that a filter offers a quick result."

John, in common with most professional *Photoshop* users, bemoans the lack of time for experimentation. "You have to treat it as something that needs exploring," says John. "Don't let it dictate."

Plug-in potential

"There is potential in there – you just have to learn how to use them," says Antony Crossfield, highlighting the central issue. The filters themselves have done nothing wrong, it's their inexpert use which has caused the problem. Because of their obvious power and the extremity of their action on your pixels, you have to use them delicately.

Terry Steeley echoes Antony in believing filters will make a comeback: "I'm sure there's loads of potential, now that *Photoshop* has the new Filter Gallery enabling users to see how different combinations of filters and settings will appear." This development suggests that Adobe itself is aware of a need to finesse their filters.

Henry Obasi takes a similar line: "Interaction between the various filters can produce an infinite number of permutations and results, so of course there's potential there." The job of the artist is to find that potential: "Many may be bad, many may be good, but for the artist this can only be good in the long run."

Even Antony, the most dedicated retoucher, is willing to say a kind word: "Plastic Wrap is kind of tacky, but I like it. It looks a bit like being covered in dribble." We get the picture. The basic message seems to be that these are powerful items and if you want to avoid ending up like Mickey Mouse in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, you need to claw back the integrity of your image every time you use a filter.

Rediscovery

So what's inhibiting the re-uptake of the filter? Howard Wakefield of Saville Associates, one of the figures behind the development of Peter Saville's waste paintings, has an idea: "When do you have the time to play and experiment?" he asks.

By common consent, this is something you need plenty of time for, even if you only want a basic grasp of the possibilities. But, as Howard says, "There's always a deadline that needs priority, so taking the time to explore the possibilities of a filter is a luxury."

Those filters that work as shortcuts remain in use, but the exploration of their creative potential isn't something a jobbing illustrator has too much time for. "Over the last few weeks I've probably used most of them," says John McFaul, "but I know what's going to work."

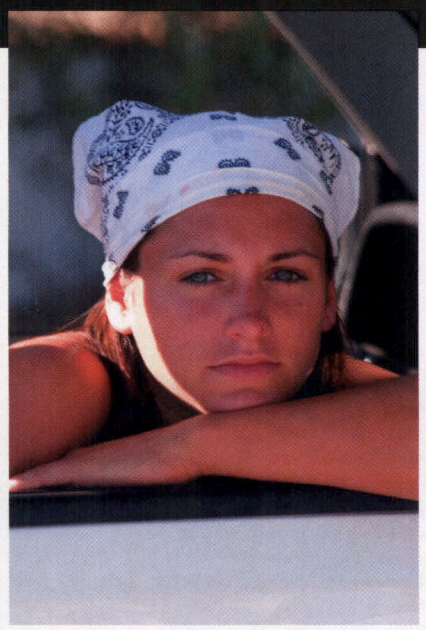
But does this mean you can't touch the Filter menu till you've become old and wise? "You don't necessarily need years of experience. You just have to be willing to challenge yourself," says John. Henry Obasi puts it very neatly: "There are no rules, it's simply about whether they help you create a good piece of work." ca-p

Before and after

Photoshop expert Terry Steeley puts the Filter menu through its paces... "Inexperienced *Photoshop* users frequently apply loads of filters without too much thought." That's the classic mistake as far as Terry Steeley is concerned. "Drop shadows, lighting effects and 3D bevel and emboss being amongst the most popular." As an acknowledged expert, Terry spends a lot of time teaching people how to get the best from Adobe's flagship application.

Terry agrees that one of the main problems with filters is frequently their overexposure: "Only too often you can spot the new filters," he says, "because printed publications are full of similar effects at that time." Very often this is a problem of time constraints – tight deadlines just don't leave designers free to experiment with effects.

"I wouldn't use Mosaic Tiles," says Terry, but that's the only filter he won't go into bat for. "Other than that I've not experimented with all of them so it would be unfair to say." Again, this seems to be the key element: experimentation. Even an educator with years of experience is willing to admit that there's uncharted territory in the Filter menu.



Terry Steeley is a designer, photographer and acknowledged *Photoshop* expert who thinks that too many people use filters without enough thought. "Drop shadows, lighting effects and 3D bevel and emboss are amongst the most popular," he says.

Terry makes the distinction between creative and production filters. The latter being more commonly used without attracting criticism: "For production, I do use the Blur filters, Unsharp Mask, High Pass and Find Edges regularly." Here he uses a creative watercolour effect.

"If you're using an effect by simply applying it in isolation without straying too far from the default settings, it's very obvious," says Terry. "Good use is seldom the application of the filters without making additional refinements." His watercolour experiments demonstrate what is meant by a light touch.

UV 77MM

Effects at your fingertips

Need a helping hand getting the most out of your filters? Over the following pages, we show you how to create twenty fantastic filter effects, each using just five easy clicks...

Photoshop's native filter set provides a plethora of tools that enable you to achieve powerful and diverse results. In this feature, we've incorporated a selection of filters into quick and effective five-click effects. These mini-tutorials demonstrate the all-too-often undiscovered potential of these native filters.

There are many who dismiss filter use in general, saying that filter effects all bear a signature look. This may be true enough when it comes to certain third-party filters and even some of the native *Photoshop* filters. However, this blanket dismissal is erroneous because there's plenty that can be achieved when certain filters are incorporated into your workflow, alongside other *Photoshop* tools and functions.

Whether creating a simulated sketch technique, removing banding in gradients, or minimising film grain, filters can be quite helpful. Tasks can often be completed quicker and results can be better if you only allow yourself to explore what lies in the Filter menu.

Words and illustration: Derek Lea [w] www.dereklea.com

Effects at your fingertips

1. Removing grain

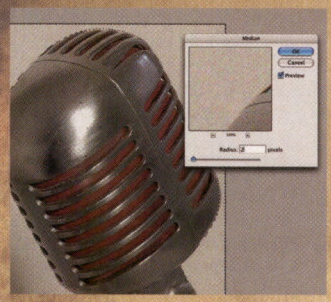
Isolate and blur the noisiest channel in your grainiest film scan to preserve the overall sharpness of the image...

By looking through the individual colour channels of grainy film scans, you're likely to find one that is the grainiest. Using the Gaussian Blur filter only within the noisiest channel enables you to quickly and substantially reduce the visible grain in your image while preserving the overall sharpness and detail.

1. Click on one of the colour channels other than the composite channel in the Channels palette.
2. Select the Zoom tool from the toolbox and click in the image window to zoom in close so that you can clearly see the grain.
3. Click on the remaining colour channels one by one and view them separately to evaluate which channel is the grainiest.
4. With the grainiest channel selected and visible, select Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur from the menu.
5. Enter a value just large enough to blur the visible grain and click OK. Preview the composite channel to see the result.

2. Reducing noise

You can reduce noise in selected areas of your image by simply using the Median filter...

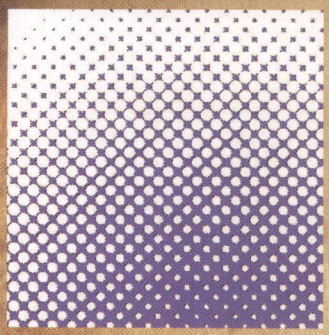


The Median filter blends the brightness values of pixels. Median looks at all of the image, searching for pixels of similar brightness. Pixels that differ too much are replaced. The results can be rather smooth but will ruin sharpness — that's why it's essential to use the Median filter within selected areas.

1. Visually assess your image and decide which area you wish to isolate for the effect. Click on the Pen tool in the toolbox.
2. Use the Pen tool to click and drag, creating a closed path that surrounds the area you wish to alter.
3. In the Paths palette, click on the 'Load path as a selection' button to generate a selection border from the path.
4. With the current selection still active, you need to choose Filter>Noise>Median from the menu.
5. Click and drag on the Radius slider or enter a numeric value in the field to define the range. Usually a value of 1 or 2 pixels is sufficient.

3. Pop art dot effects

Make the most of the Colour Halftone filter to create Lichtenstein-inspired textures...

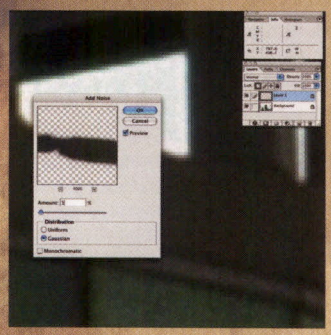


You can create Roy Lichtenstein-inspired polka dot patterns in your image inside alpha channels with clever use of the Colour Halftone filter. Then simply generate a selection from the alpha channel and fill it with colour on a layer. The secret to this process lies within the angle values you enter in the filter's fields.

1. In an alpha channel, click and drag to create a white-to-black gradient with the Gradient tool.
2. Once you've set up the gradient, choose Filter>Pixellate>Colour Halftone from the menu.
3. Enter a radius to determine the dot size, set all of the screen angles at 45 degrees and then click OK.
4. Click the 'Load channel as selection' button in the Channels palette to generate a selection from the channel.
5. In the Layers palette, select the background layer, and press Alt/Opt-delete on the keyboard to fill the selection with the current foreground colour.

4. Simulating grain

Use the Add Noise filter with layer-locking functions to remedy areas of an image that are too smooth...



Using the Clone Stamp tool on separate layers will certainly hide unwanted specs and things within your images. But when working with scanned film, repaired areas will look out of place because they're too smooth. All you need to do is add some noise and use one of the layer locks to remedy this problem.

1. In the Layers palette, click on the 'Create a new layer' button to create an empty layer above your background layer.
2. Choose the Clone Stamp tool from the toolbox and enable the 'Use all layers' function in the tool options bar.
3. Alt/Opt-click to sample an area from the image, then click and drag to paint with the sampled area on your new layer.
4. Click on the Lock Transparency button in the Layers palette so only the painted area will be affected.
5. Choose Filter>Noise>Add Noise from the menu, and adjust the amount and distribution to mimic the grain in the underlying image.

EXTRA SPECIAL EFFECT

5. Creating reflections

The Liquify filter provides everything you need to create realistic reflections in metallic surfaces...

You can use the Liquify filter to push and pull pixels in almost any manner imaginable. With a picture of something such as a sky or a city scene on a separate layer, you can use the Liquify filter to morph that image onto the contours of an object on an underlying layer. This process creates a very realistic reflection.

1. Start with a file containing an object on the background layer and a reflection image on a separate layer. Click on the reflection layer in the Layers palette to select it.
2. Choose Filter>Liquify to open the Liquify interface.
3. Click on the Show Backdrop option to view the layer behind the active layer.
4. Click on the mode pull-down and select Blend. Reduce the Opacity setting so that you can see the layers overlapping.
5. Click and drag, using the Warp tool to push the pixels of your reflection layer around to mimic the contour of your object on the underlying layer.

6. Cloudy light effects

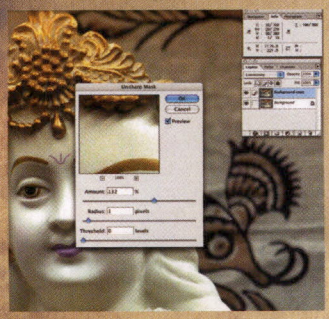
The Clouds filter is an excellent tool for creating voluminous light beam effects in your projects...

You can create a random cloud texture using your current foreground and background colour. Experienced users often avoid the effect because it's so painfully obvious. However, when used in conjunction with alpha channels and layers, you can create cloudy light effects that look unique and natural.

1. In the Channels palette, click on the 'Create new channel' button to create a new alpha channel.
2. Click on the small icon to the lower-left of the colour swatches in the toolbox to set them to their default black-and-white state.
3. Choose Filter>Render>Clouds from the menu to fill your alpha channel with a random black-and-white cloud pattern.
4. Click the 'Load channel as selection' button in the Channels palette and then choose the Gradient tool.
5. Finally, introduce colour on a new layer into the selection by patterns on multiple layers.

7. Sharpening luminance

Use the Unsharp Mask filter to focus only on image luminance, avoiding the unsightly sharpening of colour...

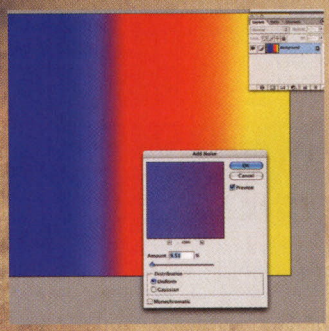


The Unsharp Mask filter, in a nutshell, enables you to find areas of contrast within your image and enhances the contrast in those areas. Problems arise when the Unsharp Mask filter starts to sharpen areas that you don't actually want affected, because it's finding and sharpening colour data from within the image.

1. Click on your background layer in the Layers palette and select Duplicate Layer from the palette menu.
2. Change the blending mode of the duplicate layer to Luminosity. This mode only blends the image luminance with underlying pixels, excluding colour information.
3. Select Filter>Sharpen>Unsharp Mask from the menu. Enter a percentage of sharpening .
4. Click and drag the Radius slider to a value of 1. A small value concentrates mainly on edge pixels only. Leave Threshold set at 0.
5. Click OK to apply the filter. To view the advantages of this technique, zoom in closely and temporarily change the blending mode of the layer back to Normal.

8. Removing banding

The solution to eliminating banding within gradients lies inside the Add Noise filter...



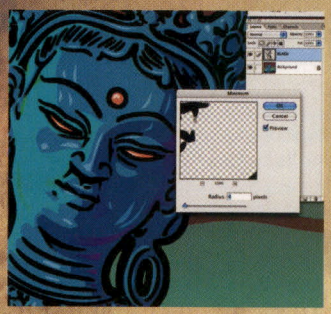
You're no doubt familiar with the scenario. You select the Gradient tool and create a nice custom-coloured gradient in the gradient editor. Then you draw a large gradient background in your image, zoom out, and what do you see? A banding effect showing the stages within the blend. Worry not, we have a remedy for this.

1. Click on the Gradient tool in the toolbox to reveal the gradient options in the tool options bar.
2. Click on the small preview in the tool options bar to open up the gradient editor.
3. Click on a gradient thumbnail from the list of presets and edit the opacity and colour stops to customise the gradient.
4. Choose the linear option in the tool options bar and then click and drag to create a gradient, complete with banding, across the image.
5. Choose Filter>Noise>Add Noise from the menu and increase the amount until you see the banding disappear. Do not add any more noise than is necessary.

Effects at your fingertips

9. Increased line thickness

The Minimum filter is an excellent tool for expanding your illustrative linework in *Photoshop*...

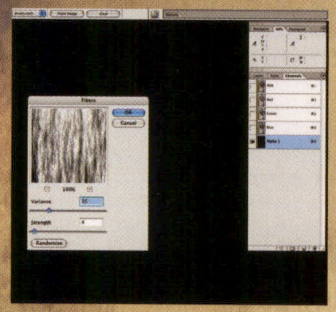


Although this filter is ideally designed for use within masks, its spreading capabilities make it an ideal candidate for spreading areas of black linework when creating comic-book-style illustrations, building up colour on layers which underlie a black outline layer. Corner areas fade gently leaving a marker drawing effect.

1. Click on the 'Create new layer' button in the Layers palette to create a layer for your black outline.
2. Use the Brush tool to click and drag, creating a series of black outlines that enclose areas to be filled with colour.
3. Use the Magic Wand tool to click within the transparent enclosed areas to select them.
4. Fill each area with colour via the Edit>Fill function in the menu. Where your coloured areas meet the black lines, there are slight gaps.
5. Select the black layer in the Layers palette and choose Filter>Other>Minimum from the menu. Increase the Radius to fill the gaps and create the marker effect.

10. Creating fibre overlays

The Fibres filter can be used to simulate all sorts of fabric overlays in your images...

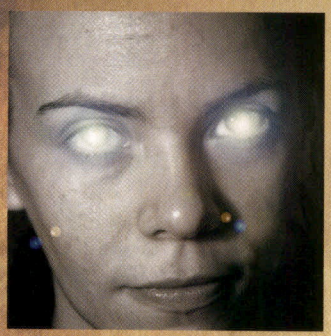


It's important to think outside of the box when it comes to looking at filters in the Render menu. In this instance, rendering some fibres inside an alpha channel enables you to create an interesting selection. This selection can then be filled on separate layers to create a linen effect.

1. Click on the 'Create new channel' button in the Channels palette. Select a white foreground colour.
2. Choose Filter>Render>Fibres. Adjust the variance and strength until the fibres look like a coarse linen, then apply the effect.
3. Hold down the Ctrl/Cmnd key and click on your alpha channel icon in the Channels palette to generate a selection from it.
4. With the selection active, click the Create New Layer icon in the Layers palette and then fill the active selection with white on the new layer.
5. Drag the Opacity slider in the Layers palette to reduce the layer opacity slightly and then change the blending mode to Overlay.

11. The evil eye

Experiment with Lens Flare effects to create sinister B-movie glowing eyes in greyscale images...



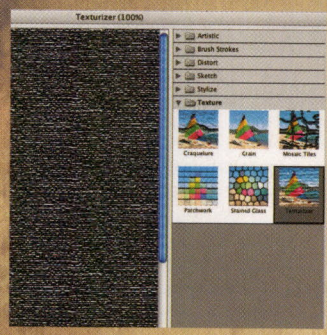
The *Photoshop* rulebook states that Lens Flares cannot be used in greyscale images. Images must be in RGB format. Worry not, because there is indeed a way to create that sinister glow in your evil monsters' eyes and still simulate greyscale appearance of those cheesy horror epics from the 1950s and 1960s.

1. Open your colour image and choose Image>Mode>Greyscale from the menu to convert your colour portrait into a lovely greyscale image.
2. However, to use the Lens Flare filter you'll need to choose Image>Mode>RGB from the menu to convert the image back to RGB mode.
3. This gives the visual effect of greyscale, but the image is made up of RGB channels. Choose Filter>Render>Lens Flare from the menu.
4. Set the Brightness to 100 and position the flare over her pupil. Choose the 105mm prime option to add the least amount of colour.
5. Click OK to apply the filter and repeat the process one more time to add a flare effect to her other eye.

12. Texturise a channel

EXTRA SPECIAL EFFECT

Less-than-obvious use of the Texturiser is the key to creating stunning canvas effects...



The Texturiser is another one of those filters that experienced users tend to stay away from. When applied to an image file directly, the results are less than impressive and instantly recognisable. However, if used to form the basis of a selection within an alpha channel, the results can be subtle and beautiful.

1. Start with an alpha channel with a black background, and then choose Filter>Texture>Texturiser.
2. Set the texture option to Canvas. Increase the scaling slightly, but increase the Relief substantially for contrast and then apply the filter.
3. Choose Image>Adjustments>Brightness/Contrast to increase the contrast further. Ctrl/Cmnd-click the channel icon to make a selection.
4. Choose Layer>New>Layer to create a new layer over the top of your image file and then select the Gradient tool.
5. Click and drag within the selection on your layer to introduce a series of subtle light-coloured gradients on the layer, simulating the raised areas of canvas.

13. Customised stained glass

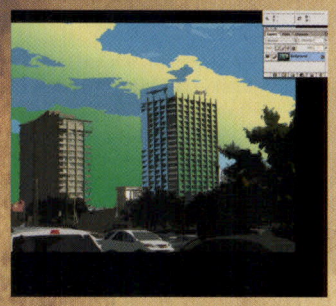
Combine this filter with the Magic Wand tool to create your own coloured stained-glass effect...

The way the Stained Glass filter breaks your image up into sections couldn't have been better designed for use with the Magic Wand tool. The stark black dividers and enclosed sections of colour lend themselves to this tool like nothing else, allowing you easy selection and re-colouring for custom stained-glass effects.

1. Open an image and leave the background layer selected. Select Filter>Texture >Stained Glass.
2. Select the 'fit in view' option in the preview section and increase the cell size and border thickness dramatically.
3. Click OK to apply the filter and select the Magic Wand tool from the toolbox. Set the Magic Wand Tolerance to 1 in the tool options bar.
4. Use the Magic Wand to click in areas of solid coloured glass and use Image>Adjustments>Hue/ Saturation to alter the colour.
5. Continue to select different areas and adjust their colours. You can even create a new design within the existing stained-glass borders.

14. Trendy illustration effects

Filters enable you to create flavour-of-the-month effects with almost no effort whatsoever...

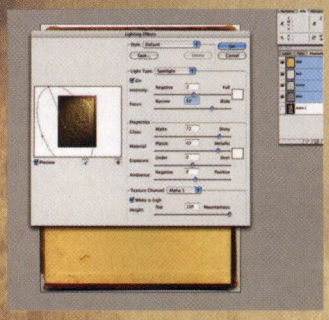


This simplified division of colour is quite fashionable in illustration circles at the moment. And so it should be, because the effect is so simple to create, yet the result is dramatic. Some artists add a bit of originality to the effect by introducing isolated gradients of colour. Worry not, we'll show you how to do just that.

1. Start by choosing Filter>Artistic >Cutout from the menu bar.
2. Set the number of Levels to 4 for a simplified effect. Set the Edge Simplicity a bit higher and then the Edge Fidelity a little lower. Apply the filter by clicking OK.
3. Select the Magic Wand tool from the toolbox and enable the Contiguous option. Then click on a flat area of colour in the image.
4. Hold down the Shift key and then click on other areas of colour to add them to the selection.
5. Select the Gradient tool from the toolbox. Choose a gradient from the gradient picker in the tool options bar and then click and drag within the active selection to add the gradient.

15. Illuminated bump maps

It's easy to create effective three-dimensional raised areas using the Lighting Effects filter...

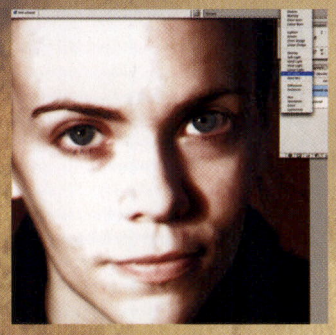


You can create interesting three-dimensional surface effects from within the Lighting Effects filter. Ideally, what you need to do is start off with an image of a simple texture such as a wall or sheet of paper. Then you can add an illuminated bump map from within the Lighting Effects Texture Channel options.

1. Click the 'Create new channel' button in the Channels palette.
2. Open another image to be used for your bumpy texture and copy it via Edit>Copy in the menu.
3. Return to your main image. Select your new alpha channel in the Channels palette and choose Edit>Paste from the menu.
4. Choose Filter>Render>Lighting Effects from the menu, add a couple of lights and adjust their individual parameters.
5. Choose your alpha channel from the Texture Channel pull-down menu and then use the height slider to increase or decrease the size of the bump created by your alpha channel.

16. Soft diffusion effects

Create cool diffusion effects in your photos by mastering this simple technique with the Diffuse Glow filter...



You can simulate dramatic exposure within your image files or digital photos by using the Distort menu's Diffuse Glow filter. The filter itself renders an image as though it were photographed using a soft diffusion filter. However, it's by combining the filter with the right layer blending mode that enables you to create great results.

1. Drag your background layer onto the 'Create a new layer' button at the bottom of the Layers palette .
2. With your duplicate layer selected, choose Filter>Distort> Diffuse Glow from the menu.
3. Leave the Graininess set to 0 to get a smooth result. Increase the Glow amount to change the exposure of your image — usually a setting of around 10 is sufficient.
4. Set the Clear amount to approximately the same number as the Glow amount to sufficiently preserve the original image. Click OK.
5. In the Layers palette, set the blending mode of the duplicate layer to Pin Light, changing the effect and revealing a little more of the underlying, original image layer.

Effects at your fingertips

17. Hallucinatory transformations

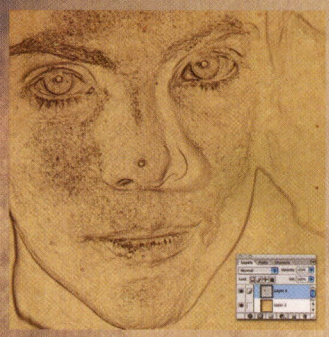
Experiment with your ordinary portrait shots to create strange and psychedelic effects...

Envisage that moment in any horror or science fiction movie when a person is beginning to transform into a creature or has just been poisoned. The wobbly, funhouse mirror effect ensues and the face stretches and pulls in all directions. Well, here's a method for creating a still frame that will convey that familiar effect.

1. Click on your background layer and duplicate it twice.
2. Disable the visibility of the top layer by clicking on the eye icon and select the middle layer. Choose Filter>Distort>Shear from the menu.
3. Grab the bottom point in the Shear filter interface and drag it towards the right. Select the Wrap Around option from the Undefined Areas options. Press OK.
4. Click on the 'Add layer mask' button and use a soft round paintbrush to mask areas of the layer, revealing features such as the eyes.
5. Enable the visibility of the top layer and shear it. Then mask the layer to reveal key features on the underlying layers.

18. A custom sketch effect

Believe it or not, the Glowing Edges filter can be used to create antique drawing effects...



If you start with a nice scan of old or brownish paper, there's an excellent technique involving alpha channels and the Glowing Edges filter that will enable you to simulate antique pencil sketches. We used a face for our subject pictured here, but feel free to try it with any object or scene you desire.

1. Open an image of some fibrous paper. In the Channels palette, click the 'Create new channel' button to create an alpha channel.
2. Open the image of your subject. Choose Select>All and then Edit>Copy from the menu. Return to your other image file.
3. Select your alpha channel and choose Edit>Paste. Choose Filter>Stylise>Glowing Edges.
4. Use a small edge width setting and a large edge brightness setting. Apply the filter and then click the 'Load channel as a selection' button in the Channels palette.
5. Click 'Create new layer' and fill the selection on the new layer with a dark sepia foreground colour.

19. Zooming in fast

Zoom effects are made even better than usual when key image elements remain preserved...

The Radial Blur filter provides an excellent and flexible zoom option that enables you to create dramatic movement emanating out from a central point. You can create more captivating images by utilising layer and masking tools to apply the zoom effect to desired areas only, preserving key visual elements.

1. Select your background layer in the Layers palette and choose Duplicate Layer .
2. Select your duplicated layer in and then choose Filter>Blur> Radial Blur from the menu.
3. Choose the Zoom method and an Amount of around 60 for a drastic effect. Specify a Quality setting.
4. Click and drag on the crosshair in the Blur Centre box. Drag the centre to approximately the same area within the image that you want the blur to emanate from. Click OK.
5. Click on the 'Add layer mask' button in the Layers palette and use the radial gradient, with a black-to-transparent setting, to click and drag over areas you wish to reveal.

20. Multi-layered motion

EXTRA SPECIAL EFFECT

Motion Blur can be combined with *Photoshop's* layer and mask tools to produce convincing results...

Motion blur can indeed add movement to your pictures, but unfortunately it alters your original image in the process. However, if you use motion blur effects on masked duplicate layers, it's possible to achieve a convincing blur effect that preserves the desired portions of your original visual elements.

1. Start with an image of a moving object. Use the Pen tool to create a closed path that outlines the object.
2. Click on the 'Load path as a selection' button to generate a selection from your closed path.
3. With the selection active, click on your background layer and then choose Layer>New>Layer Via Copy to create a layer containing a duplicate of the selected area.
4. Choose Motion Blur. Adjust Angle and Distance to convey the speed and direction. Click OK.
5. Reduce the Opacity and click the 'Add layer mask' button. Use a soft round brush to edit the mask and reveal desired areas from the original background layer.

Monotype competition

Win £2,999-worth of fonts and get your own typeface in the Monotype Library!

Computer Arts Projects and *Computer Arts* have teamed up with Monotype Imaging to bring you the chance of not only winning the company's complete library of typefaces, worth a massive £2,999, but also of having your typeface included in the Monotype Library. If judged good enough, your typeface will join the likes of Gill Sans, Cartier Book, Mundo Sans and Baskerville.

This competition provides the chance for aspiring type designers to get noticed and have their font included in one of the world's biggest collections of commercial typefaces. You'll find all the details on what you need to do to enter, plus the rules and closing date below.

What the Monotype library includes...

- 1,352 fonts including nearly 400 new releases and a number of other fonts new to the collection.
- All of the classic Monotype fonts such as: Bembo, Dante, Ellington, Gill Sans, Fournier and Palatino.
- Plus recent contemporary favourites such as Cartier Book, Mosquito, Mundo Sans and Scene.
- Licensing for 20 users and 2 printers. Includes both Macintosh and Windows PostScript data for all fonts.

The judges

Robin Nicholas
Head of Typography
Monotype Imaging

Gillian Carson
Senior Editor
Computer Arts

Rob Carney
Associate Editor
Computer Arts Projects

How to enter

In order to win this fantastic prize, you need to send us a font that you've designed. The font can be in TrueType, Postscript 1 or OpenType format, but must be your own work and designed within the last two years. For it to be eligible, the font cannot currently be sold by any commercial font foundry.

If judged good enough, the font will be included in Monotype's Library alongside such classics as Bembo, Dante and Ellington. The winner will also receive the entire Monotype Library, worth £2,999.

Send your entries via email to **rob.carney@futurenet.co.uk** with the subject heading **Monotype competition**. Alternatively, you can send your font on CD, with contact details, to the following address: **Monotype Library competition, Computer Arts Projects, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW**.

Judging will take place on **Friday 15 April, 2005**. Any entries submitted beyond this date will be disqualified.

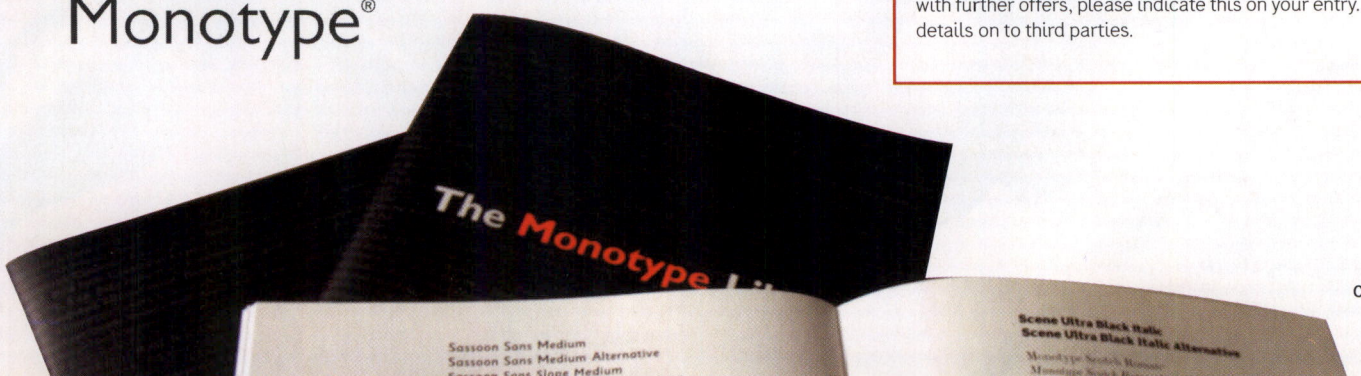
The rules: The closing date for this competition is **Friday 15 April, 2005**. Employees of Monotype Imaging and Future Publishing, their agents and families are not permitted to enter. Multiple entries are not accepted. The Editor's decision is final and there are no cash alternatives. No other correspondence will be entered into. If you are entering by post and do not wish any of the companies involved in this competition to contact you with further offers, please indicate this on your entry. We will not pass your details on to third parties.

In association with

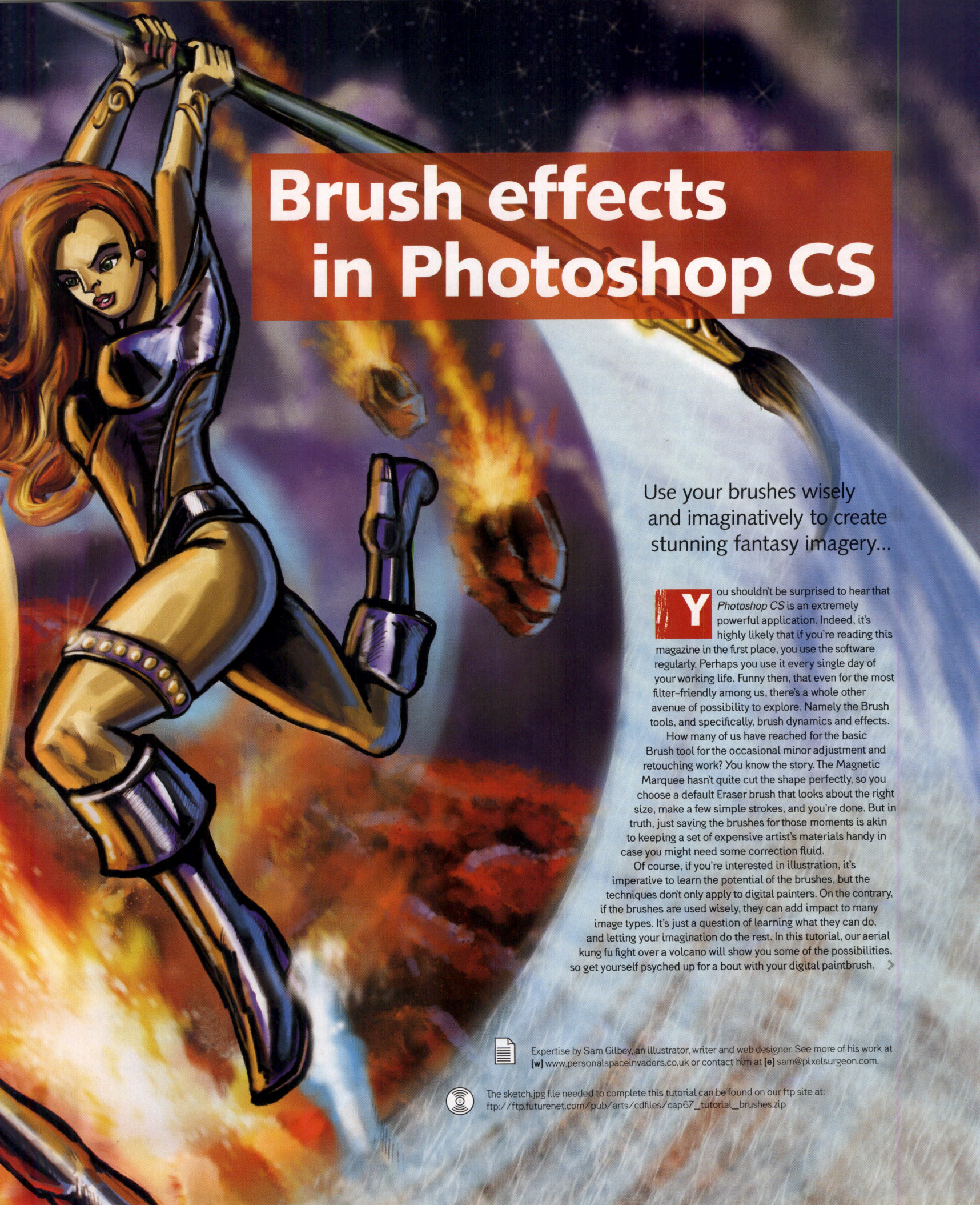
COMPUTER arts projects

COMPUTER arts

Monotype®



Gilbey



Brush effects in Photoshop CS

Use your brushes wisely and imaginatively to create stunning fantasy imagery...

You shouldn't be surprised to hear that *Photoshop CS* is an extremely powerful application. Indeed, it's highly likely that if you're reading this magazine in the first place, you use the software regularly. Perhaps you use it every single day of your working life. Funny then, that even for the most filter-friendly among us, there's a whole other avenue of possibility to explore. Namely the Brush tools, and specifically, brush dynamics and effects.

How many of us have reached for the basic Brush tool for the occasional minor adjustment and retouching work? You know the story. The Magnetic Marquee hasn't quite cut the shape perfectly, so you choose a default Eraser brush that looks about the right size, make a few simple strokes, and you're done. But in truth, just saving the brushes for those moments is akin to keeping a set of expensive artist's materials handy in case you might need some correction fluid.

Of course, if you're interested in illustration, it's imperative to learn the potential of the brushes, but the techniques don't only apply to digital painters. On the contrary, if the brushes are used wisely, they can add impact to many image types. It's just a question of learning what they can do, and letting your imagination do the rest. In this tutorial, our aerial kung fu fight over a volcano will show you some of the possibilities, so get yourself psyched up for a bout with your digital paintbrush.

Expertise by Sam Gilbey, an illustrator, writer and web designer. See more of his work at **[w]** www.personalspaceinvaders.co.uk or contact him at **[e]** sam@pixelsurgeon.com.

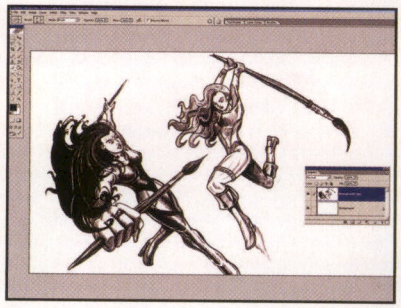
The sketch.jpg file needed to complete this tutorial can be found on our ftp site at: ftp://ftp.futurenet.com/pub/arts/cdfiles/cap67_tutorial_brushes.zip

Part 1: Composition

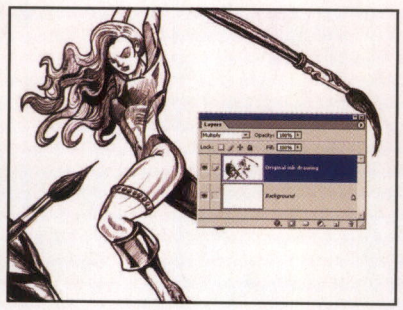
Before putting any paint on your brushes, here are some basic tips...

Save yourself

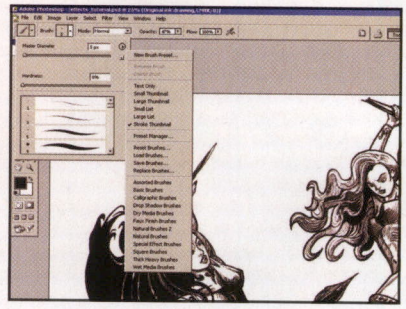
Saving your own custom brushes can be extremely useful if you ever need to produce a series of pieces, and it's actually a great way to consolidate your materials. Once you've got a brush that you think you're going to use a lot, just click on New Brush Preset at the top of the Brush Selection menu. Keep a naming convention related to the tasks they'll be used for.



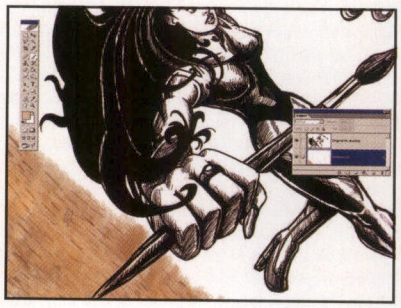
1 Download sketch.jpg from ftp://ftp.futurenet.com/pub/arts/cdfiles/cap67_tutorial_brushes.zip. Duplicate the background layer, then click on the bottom layer and press Ctrl+A (or Cmnd+A) to select all. Delete the content of the layer, ensuring that your background colour is white. This is where we'll build up the atmosphere.



2 To 'see through' the top layer, change the layer mode from Normal to Multiply. Rename the layer as 'Original ink drawing' and save the .psd file to your machine. Brush dynamics are fun, but will take a while to get familiar with, so make plenty of saves, and use multiple layers.

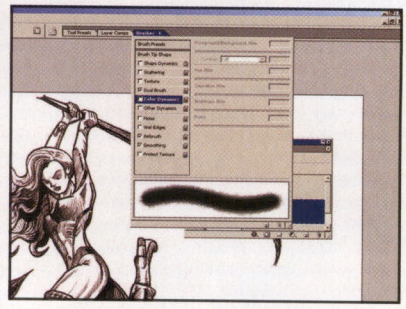


3 With the background layer selected, choose the Brush tool from the Tools palette. Click on the small arrow next to the brush 'footprint' at the top of the screen. When the palette expands, click the top right arrow on the palette. Change the current brushes to Dry Media Brushes.

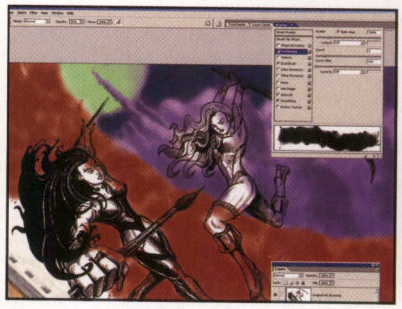


4 Scroll down the selection of brushes until you get to the Hard Charcoal Edge brush. Set the Size to 135, the Opacity to 50 per cent, and choose a midtone beige. Build up some large overlapping angled strokes in the bottom-left corner. Use smaller, darker strokes for the table grain.

5 From the same brush menu, select the fourth brush from the top, the Soft Oil Pastel. On a new layer called Sketchbook, draw in the pages using different tones, brush sizes and opacity. This is your first chance to create textures before the more elaborate effects, so play around.

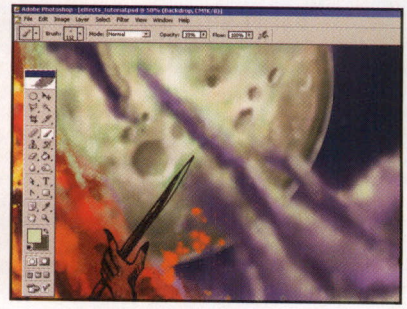


6 Now we want to work the main colours into the backdrop, but we don't want it to look flat. Above the list of brush sets, click on Reset Brushes. Select the brush from the bottom of the menu, setting the size to 350. Press F5 to open the Brushes palette.



7 Take a few moments to look at the options, but for now just turn on Scattering. In the Scatter menu, drag the top slider to 200 per cent, and set the count to 3. Note how the brush preview changes, then paint the main colours, experimenting with the Scattering, Size and Opacity.

8 More texture is required, but to keep the backdrop atmospheric, and not intrusive, keep the same brush. Start on the volcano first, keeping the Scattering high for the rocks, and especially the lava. Select Other Dynamics from the Brushes palette and utilise Opacity Jitter, to bring the volcano to life.



9 Another powerful way to save time is through Colour Dynamics, also contained within the Brushes palette. Using the bottom brush from the Natural Brushes set, try adjusting the amount of Jitter on the Hue, Saturation and Brightness sliders. With Opacity set to below 50 per cent, add craters to the moon and cloud highlights.

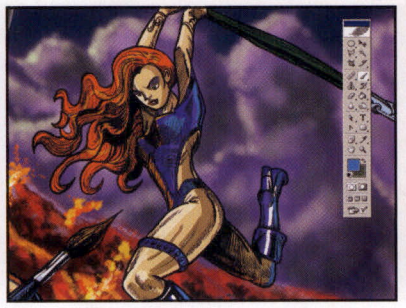
Part 2: Adding characters

Try some new techniques and develop your character-development skills...

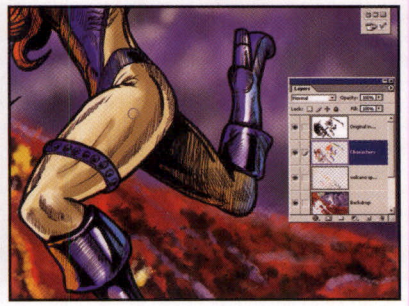
Frequently used brushes

Saving regularly used brushes as Tool Presets means you can change between them with ease, bypassing the full brush lists. If you're combining techniques in quick succession to build up an effect, this can really improve your efficiency. With the brush tool selected, click the arrow next to the brush icon at the top left of the screen. Create a new preset from the top-right arrow on the palette.

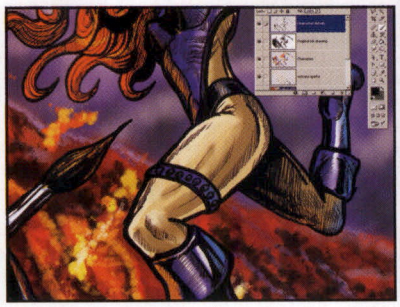
1 It's time to introduce our main characters. Add a new layer called Characters, making sure it's still beneath the original ink drawing. To go for a real comic book style, paint flat colours using brushes from the Calligraphic selection. Yes you're just colouring in, but it needs to be done.



2 Of course the characters look particularly flat now, especially against the textured backdrop. Keeping beneath the ink drawing, and still with the Calligraphic brushes, paint in highlights and shadows along the appropriate contours. Think how the backdrop might reflect colour and light onto the skin and costumes.

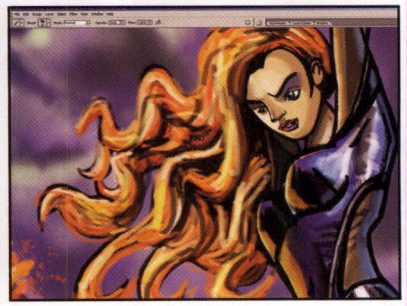


3 Calligraphic brushes are sharp and precise, but leave a harsh edge. From the Tools palette, select the Smudge tool. Set the strength to 90 per cent and brush size to 60. Uncheck the Use All Layers and Finger Painting boxes if you need to. Blend the shadows and highlights into each other.

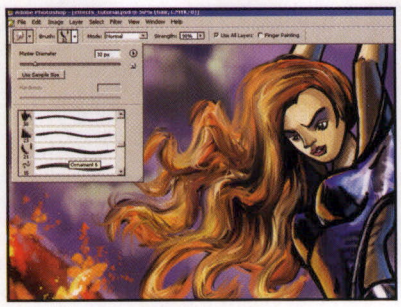


4 Back to the brushes. The Permanent Marker is the 13th brush in the Dry Media Brushes list. Some of the outlines need to be a bit bolder, so make sure the colour you've selected is black, and work around the main characters on a new layer above the drawing.

5 Select the 'Oil Medium to Large' tip, which is the 19th brush in the Wet Media selection. Using the cross-hatching from the drawing beneath as a guide, start to render the characters in colour. Keeping the brush Opacity set below 50 per cent, smooth out the characters and add sheen to the edges.



6 Start a new layer called Hair. You'll need to work on the hair in two stages. First of all, using the same brush, add some strokes that roughly follow the shape of the hair from the drawing. Vary the colours, with a high contrast between the darkest and lightest tones.



7 Go back to the Tools palette and select the Smudge tool. Then, open the Assorted Brushes and scroll down to the 19th brush, the Ornament 6. This is like using a virtual comb, and you'll have some sleek shiny locks. Work in more colour until you get the desired effect.

8 Apply the same technique to the other character, but in this case you don't need to add too much colour. Stick to black and red, making sure in both cases that you have the 'Use All Layers' box checked. This enables you to incorporate additional tones from the drawing beneath.

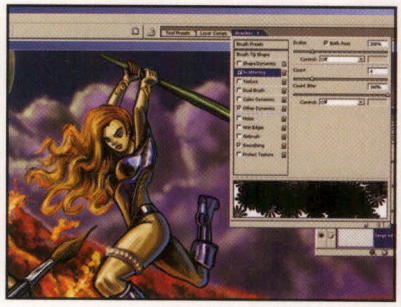
9 But it's not all about the special effects you know. In fact, they can only work if you've done the hard work beforehand. Add a new layer called Character Accessories, reset the brushes to the default set, and use the simple airbrushes to work more details into the characters.

Part 3: Effects time

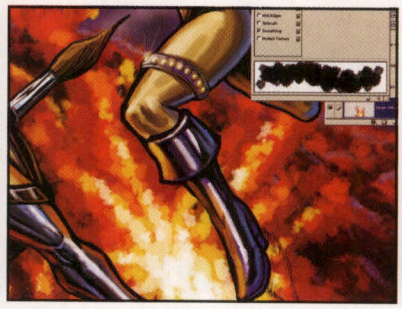
Some more advanced techniques give your piece real impact...

It's good to experiment

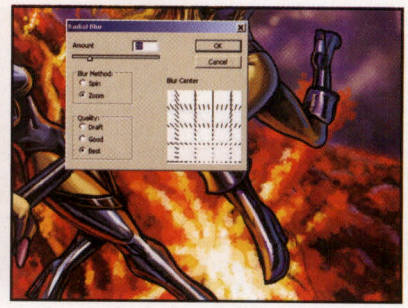
Hopefully we've given you a glimpse of the kind of effects you can achieve with *Photoshop* brushes, but it's really just the beginning. As you follow the steps, you might be tempted to take things in your own direction, just because the possibilities are so massive. If that's the case, then go for it. You can never play too much, because that's how you forge your unique style in the end.



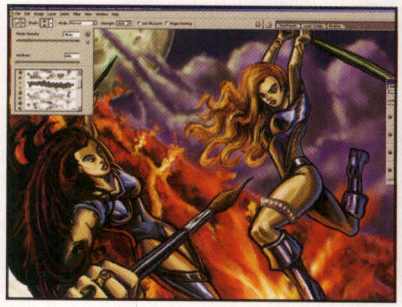
1 All the volcano effects are a little distant. From the Special FX menu, select the top brush, the Azalea. Set the Size to 70, the Opacity to 70, and open the Brushes palette. Uncheck Colour Dynamics, but turn on Scattering, dragging the slider to 200 per cent, with the count on 4.



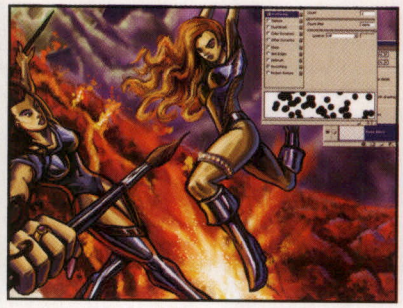
2 Making sure you have a new layer set up beneath the characters but above the volcano, paint some deep red strokes that roughly resemble the direction of a flame bursting from the surface. Then work inside the red with an orange, and a smaller brush, then yellow, then orange.



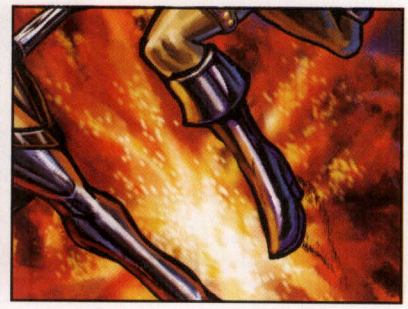
3 The scattering Azalea has saved us some time, but it's not particularly like a flame yet. Open the Filter menu, and go to Blur>Radial Blur. Set the Method to Zoom, the Distance to 30, then put the Blur Centre as close to the root of the flame as possible.



4 Almost there. Now select the Smudge tool again. For a brush, use the Drippy Waterclour, fourth down the Special Effect brushes menu. Starting from the outside of the flame, drag the colour around until you have something that looks like licking flames. Now you just need a few sparks.

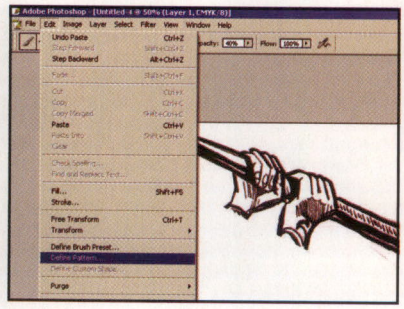


5 Go back to the default brush set, and choose the 19-pixel diameter brush. Then from the Brushes palette, set the Scattering to high, but make sure the Count is set right down low. On a new layer, paint some white specks working out from the flames centre, gradually making them fainter.



6 To add some dynamism, go to Filter>Blur> Motion Blur. Set the angle to -53 and the distance to 28, and then press OK. Now combine the brush effects with a technique you may be more familiar with. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Outer Glow, and add a glow for some extra style.

7 Now we're going to make a custom brush so we can apply a motion trail to the sweep of the right character's brush. Click on the 'Original ink drawing' layer, and then select the Polygonal Lasso from the Tools palette. Without being too careful, set a marquee around the weapon.



8 Copy the selection, then press Ctrl+N (or Cmnd+N) to open a new document. It'll be set to the size of the marquee boundary you just defined. Paste in the brush, then click on Edit> Define Brush Preset. Name it Brush Trail, and return to the main document.

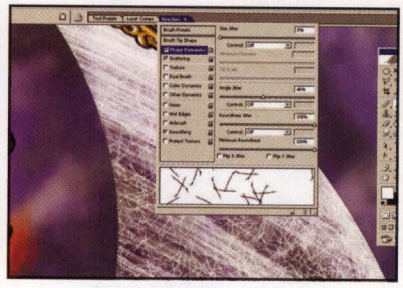
9 Turn the marquee off, and reselect the Brush tool. Scroll to the bottom of the current brush selection and choose the new preset you've just created. Set your Colour to White and the Opacity to 40 per cent. Build up a ghostly trail with the brush on a layer beneath the characters.

Effects time continued...

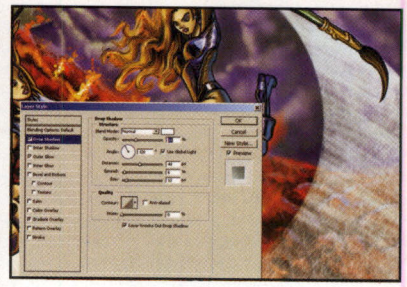
Don't lose your balance

Once you've seen the kind of effects you can achieve with *Photoshop* brushes, it can be tempting to use them at every possible opportunity. We've shown you a range of applications within an image designed to showcase them. But try to exercise restraint, and incorporate then into your own pieces as and when they're appropriate. Remember, the best special effects in movies are the ones you don't notice at all!

10 Use the Elliptical Marquee tool to demarcate the weapon's motion trail. Zoom out to draw a large enough ellipse. Hold down the Alt key so you can cut the inner path of the ellipse. When you're pleased with the shape of the trail, go to Select>Inverse and delete everything outside.



11 You can adjust your custom brush as you would any other. Select the inverse area again, and click on the Brush tool. Set the Size to 100, and the Opacity to 80 per cent. From Shape Dynamics in the Brushes palette, drag Angle Jitter to 46 per cent and, hey presto, you have cool sparks!



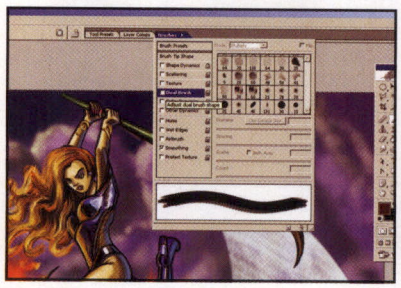
12 To make the motion trail as powerful as possible, keep the area in the marquee and apply a subtle Motion Blur. Then go to Layer>Layer Style and apply a glow, a gradient fill that fades from transparent blue to full white, and a bright drop shadow to diffuse it further.

Part 4: Finishing touches

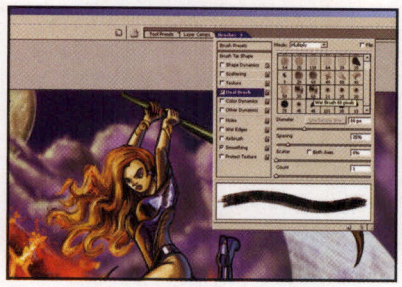
Apply brush skills in new ways to complete the piece...

Test your skills further

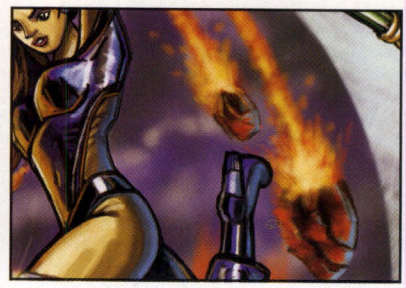
If the potential of *Photoshop* brushes has whet your appetite for more, you might be wondering how you can continue with the experimentation. It's never very satisfying to just sit in front of a white canvas doodling, so set yourself a task. Space themes lend themselves well to all the pyrotechnics that the brushes facilitate, so why not try interpreting a favourite scene from a sci-fi movie?



1 Beneath the 'motion trail' layer, add a 'rocks' layer. We're going to combine one brush with another and paint some rocks spewing from the volcano. Open the Natural Brushes selection, and select the Chalk – Dark, second from top. Open the Brushes palette and tick the box next to Dual Brush.

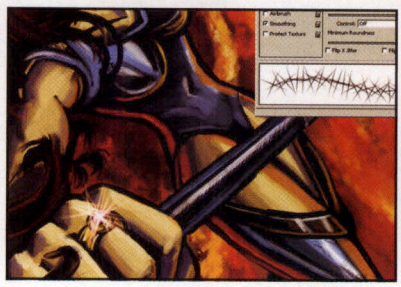


2 Click on a few brushes from the Dual Brush menu, watching how the brush preview changes. It's a useful technique if you can't find what you need from any single brush. Select the Wet Brush 60 pixels, which is three in from the left and one up from the bottom.



3 Pick a deep brown colour, making sure the Opacity is set at 60 per cent and the Flow is 100 per cent. Use your dual brush to paint some strongly textured rocks. Add various tones and highlights to give the rocks depth and form, and paint a stuttering flame trail, which you can blur slightly.

4 To add more sense of movement to the right character, select the bottom Wet Media brush. Set the Opacity to 94 per cent, the size to 102, and paint bright blue streaks behind the motion trail, and around the character like a forcefield. Apply a Spin Radial Blur from the Filter menu.



5 To make the ring sparkle, open the Assorted brushes, and select Crosshatch 4, the ninth brush down. In the Brushes palette, set Angle Jitter to 95 per cent in Shape Dynamics. Set the size to 200, and click the same spot a few times. Add a subtle red layer glow.

6 From the techniques you've learned in this tutorial, you can now go and add the finishing touches as you see fit. Put some spiral binding on the sketchbook, add some paint to the brushes, and so on. Try and balance the whole image. ca-p

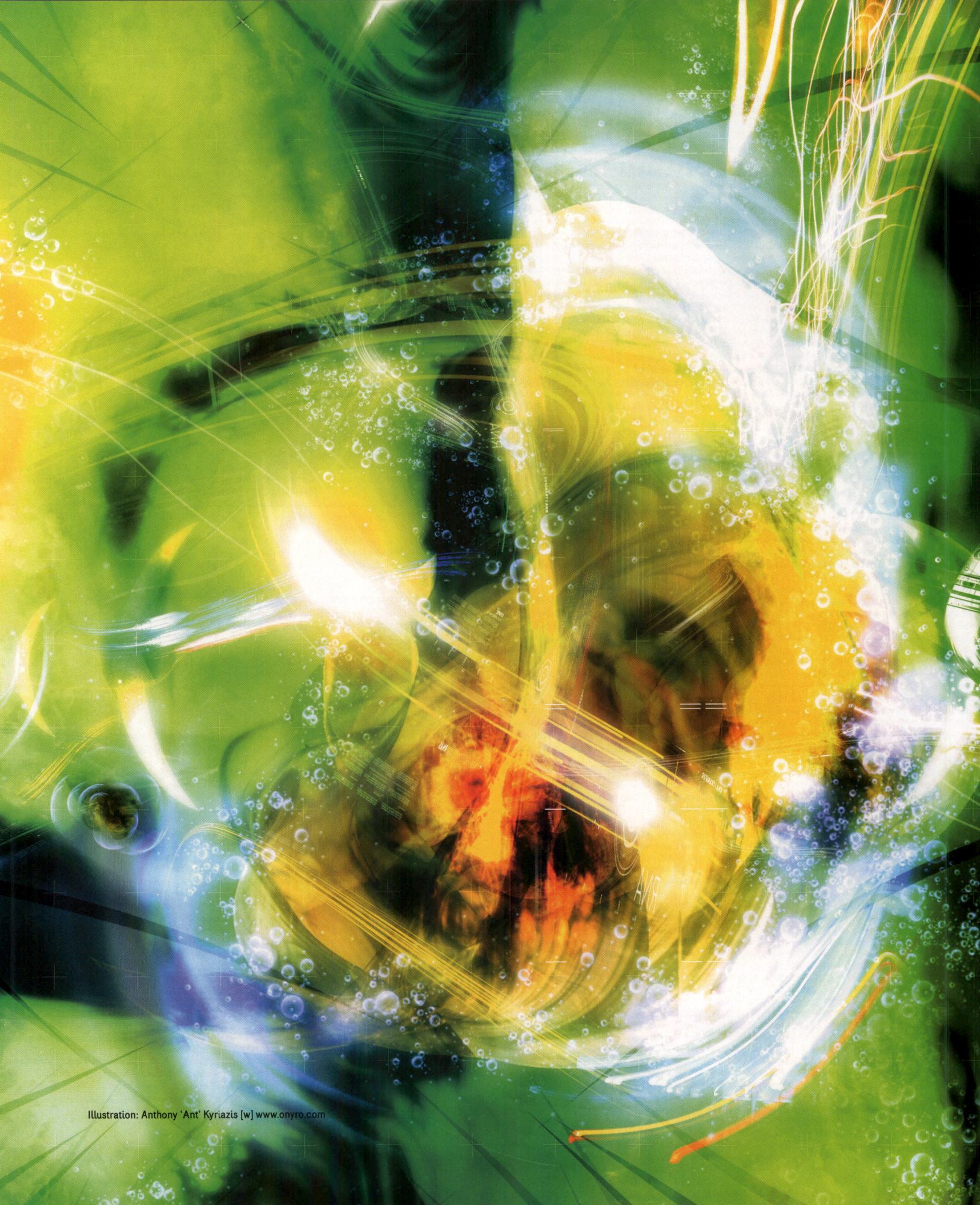


Illustration: Anthony 'Ant' Kyriazis [w] www.onyro.com

Blurred vision

The Blur filters in *Photoshop* have many creative uses besides putting pixels out of focus. We explore some of the techniques that will change your point of view...

Everyone has used the Gaussian Blur filter at some point as part of a creative process, but the Blur sub-menu filters offer much more than just this application. For example, blurring a slightly pixelated image can be the first step to improving the quality of it. This would then be followed by duplicating the background layer and using subtle blending modes to create a smoother result.

The Smart Blur filter also offers a way of smoothing out areas of an image while keeping the edge detail sharp. The Edge Only and Overlay Edge modes in the dialog box are really only there to see how the filter will affect the edge detail, but again these modes can be useful in creating a stylised effect as part of an illustration.

With the addition of the Lens Blur filter, you can now finally achieve quite convincing-looking depth-of-field effects too. We look at this new filter in detail to create two different types of background blur effects. The first produces a subtle blur that makes the foreground subject stand out from the background, and the second focuses on toning down the background and boosting the colour of the image. We also look at the other Blur filters to see how they can be best used.

Expertise provided by Frank Bartucca. Frank can be contacted at **[e]** frankdesign@btinternet.com.

All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be found on the CD in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Blur folder. Note that the Running Man.tif and Elvis.tif images are the copyright of Digital Vision (**[w]** www.digitalvision.com). These are supplied for the sole purpose of following this tutorial and are not for commercial use.

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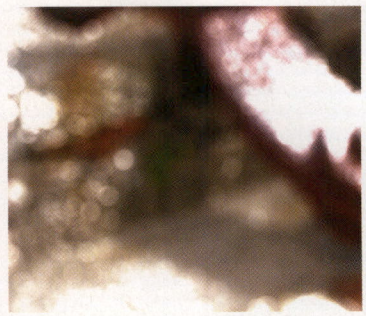
Lens Blur filter explained

A welcome and long overdue addition to the *Photoshop* Blur filter set...

Before the arrival of the Lens Blur filter, achieving realistic depth-of-field effects in *Photoshop* was never an easy task. The results were less than convincing because a conventional camera handles distant objects in a different way to just blurring them as you did in *Photoshop*. The light entering the camera lens diffuses and expands to create circular highlights and hot spots.

Now you can create these effects easily with the Lens Blur filter. A layer mask or alpha channel can be used as a 'depth map' to isolate an object while blurring the rest of an image. By default, the black areas of a depth map are considered to be in the foreground, and white areas in the background. But the focal plane can also be adjusted manually using the Blur Focal Distance slider.

Camera lenses have different shaped irises depending on how many blades are contained in the lens. To add an extra bit of realism to the effect, you can choose from several iris shapes ranging from triangular to octagonal. The octagonal shape gives the best results, especially when the Blade Curvature option is set to a high value making the shapes more circular. The Specular Highlights option handles the brightness of the lightest areas in an image. The Brightness option along with the Threshold option help to create those blown-out areas that appear in real photographs, where the background is way out of focus.



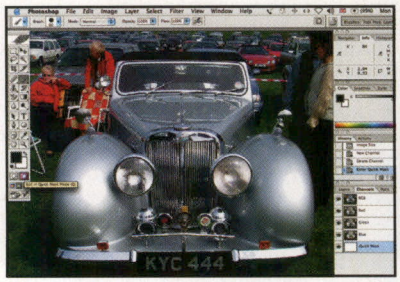
The Lens Blur filter produces the kind of realistic blurring effect you get when using a low f-stop setting with a real camera.

Part 1: Using the Lens Blur filter

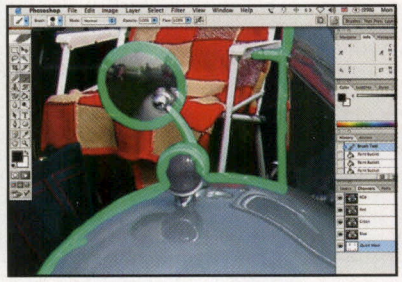
This filter enables you to apply a narrow depth-of-field effect. The hardest part is creating a depth map...

Blade Curvature and Rotation

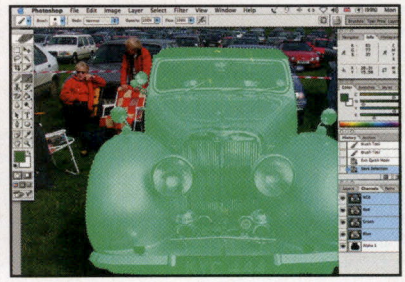
These options help to create a more realistic effect by smoothing the edges of the chosen iris shape. The Radius setting needs to be on a fairly high value to see the effect take place when the background is blurred beyond recognition. The effect simulates the overlapping circular blurred effect that you get with a real camera. Any highlights are blown out completely and merge into circular white blobs, resulting in a very convincing effect.



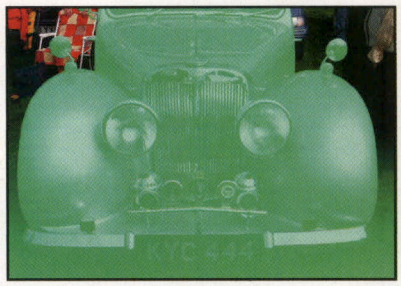
1 Open the Vintage car.tif file from the cover CD. This image is ideal for creating a narrow depth-of-field effect because it has a prominent object in the foreground. First, create a depth map on an alpha channel by using a mask. Press 'Q' on the keyboard to enter Quick Mask mode.



2 Pick up the Brush tool and select a round brush tip of 10 pixels and 50 per cent Hardness. Paint all around the edges of the car, changing the brush size as you go for smaller details such as the wing-mirror arms. If you go over any edges, press the 'X' key to switch to white paint and tidy any overlap.



3 Pick up the Paint Bucket tool and fill in the centre of the mask, then paint over the thin line where the fill doesn't quite meet the brush strokes, to complete the mask. Press 'Q' to turn the mask into a selection and click on the 'Save selection as channel' button in the Channels palette.



4 Deselect and pick up the Gradient tool. Click on the Alpha 1 eye icon and apply a linear gradient from the bottom of the number plate to the middle of the headlamps of the car. Click on the RGB composite thumbnail and go to Filter> Blur>Lens Blur. Choose Alpha 1 from the Source pop-up menu.

5 Leave the Blur Focal Distance set to 0, then set the Iris Shape to Octagon and the Radius to 20. The Blade Curvature and Rotation can be left at zero because they won't make any difference in this subtle effect. Set the Specular Highlights Brightness value to 15 and Threshold to 250.

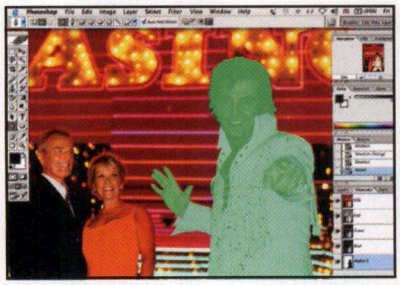
6 Set the Noise Amount to 10, Distribution to Gaussian and check the Monochromatic box to bring back in a little detail in the blurred areas and to create a more natural blend between foreground and background. If the edges of the car are too crisp, undo the filter and blur the alpha channel before applying the Lens Blur again.

Part 2: Colour boost blur

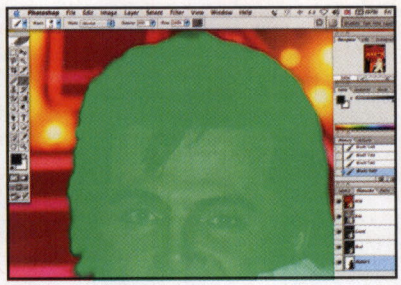
Elvis is brought back to life by blurring and darkening the background of this image...

Foreground blur

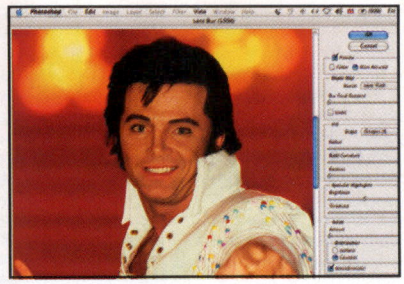
You can reverse the effect of the Lens Blur filter to blur the foreground and keep the background in focus. You will still need to create a layer mask or alpha channel as a depth map to isolate the subject. But because it'll need a feathered edge, it can be painted quickly with the Brush tool. Then either click on the Invert button in the dialog box to flip the depth map, or use the Blur Focal Distance slider to make a more precise selection of which areas are blurred and which are in focus.



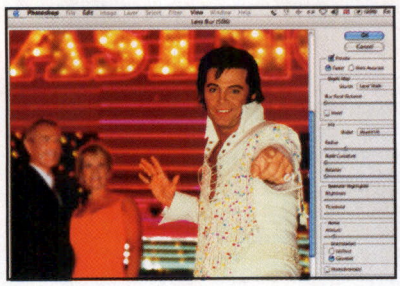
1 Open the Elvis.tif file from the cover CD. Start by drawing a path around the Elvis impersonator. When you come to the hair, just draw around the main outline. Click on the 'Load path as a selection' button, use it to create a new alpha channel and invert it.



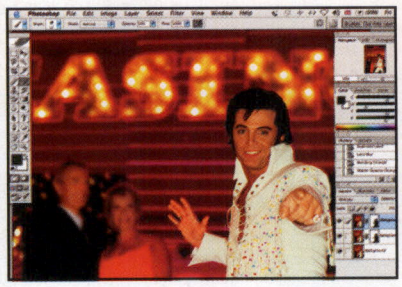
2 Go to Filter>Blur>Blur More to soften the edges of the mask. Pick up the Brush tool and choose a soft-edged brush of about 17 pixels at 50 per cent Opacity. Paint over and around the edges of the hair to create a softer blend with the background.



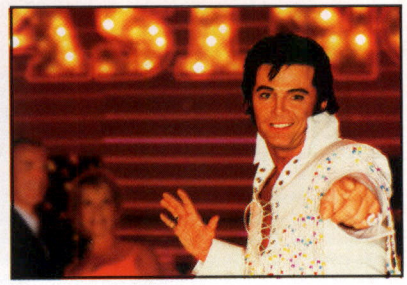
3 Duplicate the background layer and use the alpha channel as a selection to create a layer mask. To see if the layer mask will look convincing, open the Lens Blur filter, select the More Accurate preview mode and Layer Mask from the Source pop-up menu.



4 Adjust the mask if necessary then open the Lens Blur filter again. Select the Faster preview mode and Layer Mask from the Source pop-up menu. Set the Iris Shape to Square, Radius to 25, Blade Curvature and Rotation to 0. Set the Brightness to 100, Threshold to 246, Noise Amount to 10, and select Gaussian Distribution.



5 Duplicate this layer and open the Lens Blur filter. Choose the Octagon shape, set the Radius to 60 and increase the Specular Highlights Brightness to 36. Set this layer to Multiply at 50 per cent Opacity to darken the background a little and add a halo effect around the lights.



6 Now, to boost the skin tones of the Elvis character, duplicate the background layer and drag it to the top of the stack. Make a selection from one of the layer masks and click on the 'Add layer mask' button, invert the mask and set the layer to Soft Light.

Part 3: Blur filter adjustments

Blur filters are often used to add depth to an image on a duplicate layer...

1 This technique works well on most images and is especially effective on portraits of people. Open an image of your choice and duplicate the background layer, go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and enter a low value. Here the filter has been set to 5 pixels for a subtle blur.

2 The layer can then be set to Overlay or Soft Light to blend the effect in with the background layer. Overlay will produce an image with deeper colours and softer edges, while the Soft Light blending mode will retain more detail and give the colours a little boost.

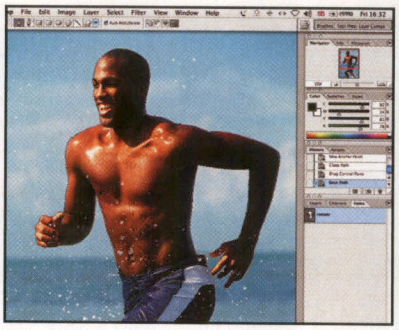
3 You can use the Smart Blur filter to flatten areas of colour while still retaining edge detail. The Radius and Threshold are set to 100, Quality on High and Mode on Normal, then the duplicate layer is set to Soft Light. This method helps smooth areas suffering from over-compression.

Part 4: Motion Blur techniques

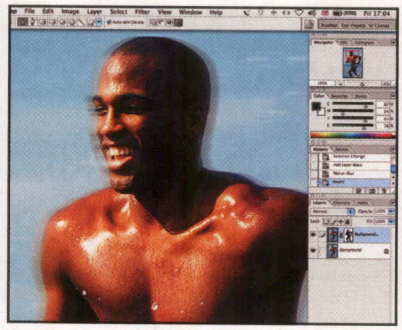
This effect is applied over several layers and blended to simulate an image taken with a panning camera...

Look at real photos

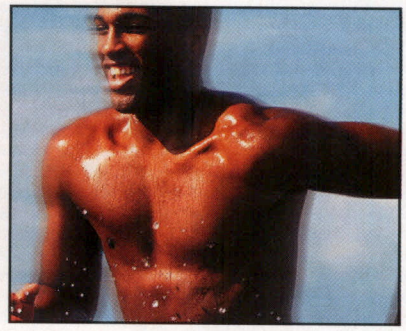
This tutorial is designed to show you that it's fairly easy to create a dynamic image from a standard photograph. Most photographers will shoot an image like this with a panning camera and using fill-in flash to capture the moving subject, while the background is blurred. This technique is difficult to get right, but by starting with a fairly static image, the motion effect can be applied in *Photoshop*. Blurring the background is easy, but the trick is to study these kinds of photos and replicate the effects. Notice how the edges of the subject blend with the background and how parts of the subject become almost transparent.



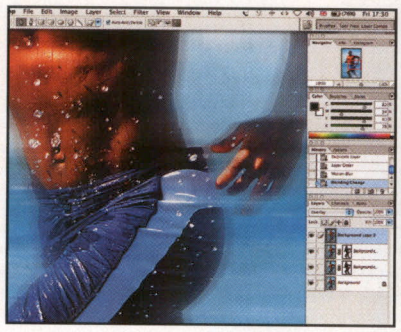
1 Open the Running Man.tif file from the cover CD. Start by drawing a path around the runner. When you get to the legs, follow the line of legs without worrying about the droplets of water. This path will form a basic layer mask that will be manipulated by the Motion Blur filter.



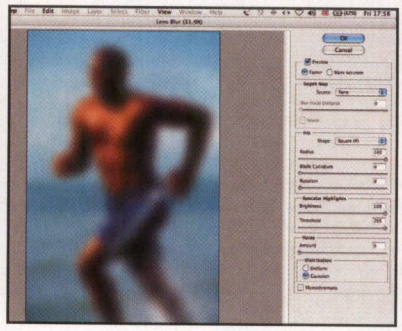
2 Duplicate the background layer, select the path and use it to add a layer mask. Invert the layer mask, then go to Filter>Blur>Motion Blur and set the Angle to 0 and the Distance to 50 pixels. This creates a subtle blur effect around the edges of the runner as the filter is applied to the layer mask too.



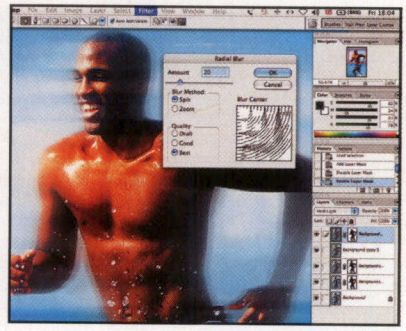
3 Duplicate the background copy layer and apply the Motion Blur filter at 200 pixels. Set the layer blending mode to Lighten to extend the overall blur effect. This creates patches of lighter areas where the blur overlaps the body of the runner and the background.



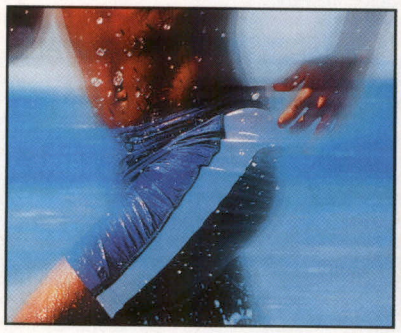
4 Now add a combined blur and exposure effect. Duplicate the background layer and place it at the top of the stack. Apply the Motion Blur filter at 400 pixels and set the layer to Overlay. Now you can see the edges of the runner's body starting to merge with the background.



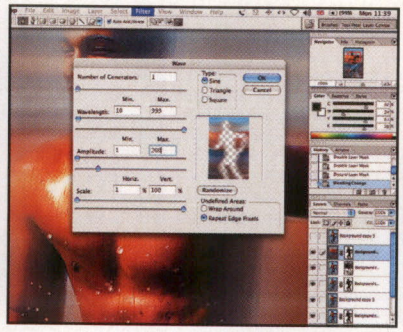
5 Duplicate the background layer again and place it at the top. Open the Lens Blur filter and set the Source to None, Iris Shape to Square, Radius to 100, Blade Curvature to 0, Rotation to 0, Brightness to 100, Threshold to 255 and Noise Amount to 0. This creates an extreme blur effect.



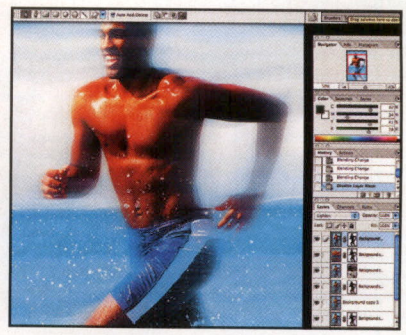
6 Now apply the Radial Blur filter with the Amount set to 20, Blur Method on Spin and choose Best for Quality. Drag the Blur Centre to the top-left corner. Select the Background Copy 2 layer mask to add a mask to the layer to hide the effect in certain areas. Set the layer mode to Hard Light.



7 Duplicate the background layer, place it at the top and apply a Gaussian Blur of 20 pixels. Click on the Channels tab and select the Cyan channel. Use the selection to add a layer mask and invert it. Set the layer to Colour Dodge to increase the blending of the runner with the background.



8 Duplicate the Background Copy 4 layer and place it at the top. Apply the Motion Blur filter at the maximum of 999 to the layer but not the layer mask. Link the layer mask again and apply a subtle wave effect, then set the layer to Overlay to add wavy streaks across the background.



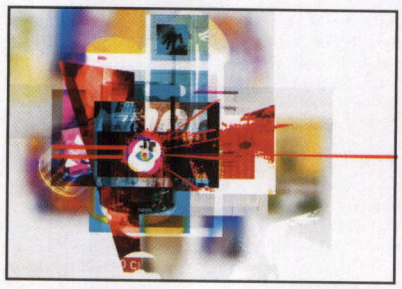
9 Now duplicate the background layer, place it at the top and select the Background Copy layer mask to add a layer mask to the layer. Set the layer to Lighten to bring back the drops of water in the foreground and the grainy texture in the background.

Part 5: Zoom effect

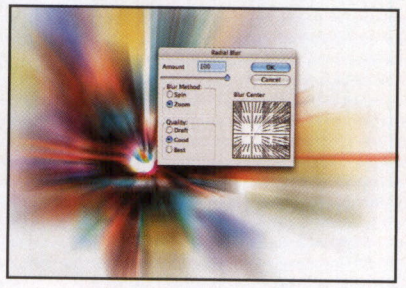
The Radial Blur filter is used here to help create a focal point in this illustration...

Not so Average

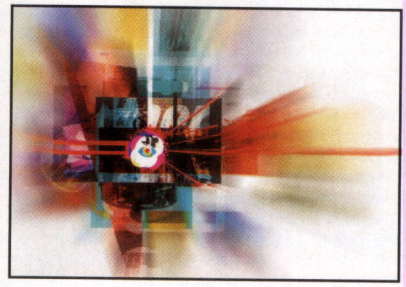
Applying the Average blur filter to an entire image will invariably turn the image into a solid block of grey. However, as you can see from this tutorial, when applied to selections, the selected colours are flattened into a single colour. This filter is ideal for quickly turning a portrait into a simplified flat colour illustration. Or try using it on a duplicate layer to create a more stylised effect on a photo and blending the layers with Soft Light or Overlay.



1 This illustration is finished, but suffers from being too complicated when the initial intention is to draw the viewer's eye to the centre. The layered *Photoshop* file is saved as a tiff to merge all the layers together, then the background layer is duplicated to apply the Radial Blur filter.



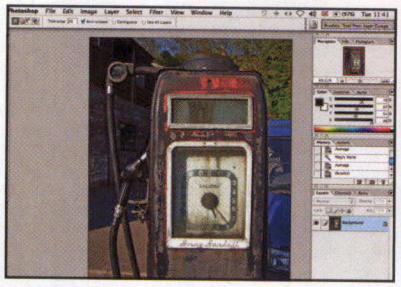
2 In the Radial Blur dialog box, the Amount is set to the maximum of 100, Blur Method to Zoom and the Quality to Good. The Blur Centre is dragged to match the centre of the illustration. It can be tricky to pinpoint an exact location on an image, so practise with a low Amount and Quality setting first to view the effect quickly.



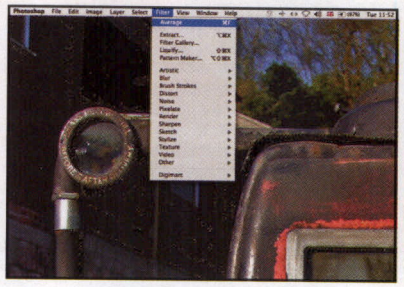
3 A layer mask is added to the duplicate layer and a radial gradient is applied from the centre of the image to the edge to hide the radial blur effect in the centre. Now the viewer's eye is drawn immediately to the centre of the illustration and the sharp edges have been softened by the effect.

Part 6: Average and Smart Blur illustration

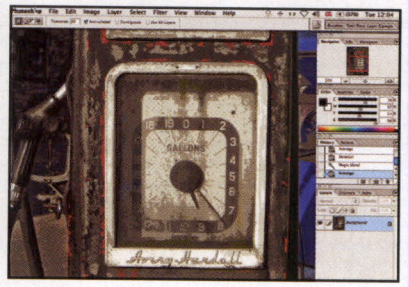
When applied to selections, this filter can produce a flat colour illustration from a photograph...



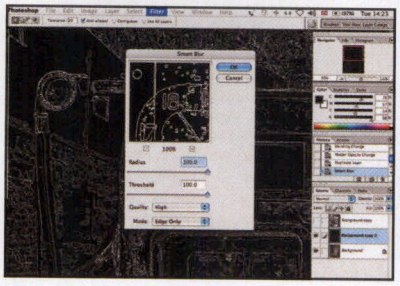
1 Open the Old petrol pump.tif from the cover CD. You can make selections using either the Colour Range command or the Magic Wand tool. We'll use the Magic Wand tool because you get quicker results. Select the Magic Wand tool, set the Tolerance to 20 and uncheck the Contiguous box.



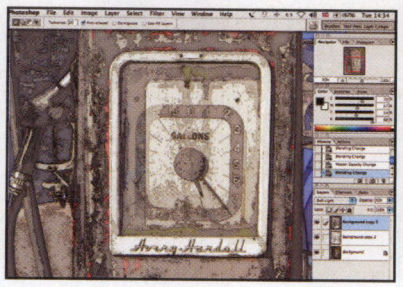
2 Click in the top left-hand corner of the image on a brown area to make the first selection. Go to Filter>Blur>Average, to fill the selection with the average colour sampled from the selection. Deselect and click on a darker part in the same area and press Ctrl/Cmnd+F to run the filter again.



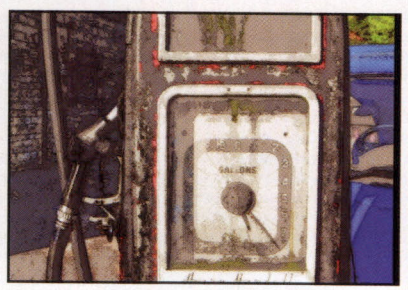
3 Repeat this process of selecting areas and applying the Average filter until you end up with a completely flat colour illustration. You'll need to zoom in to check for stray pixels and select these too. Try to select the most colourful areas to stop the image from being filled with too much grey.



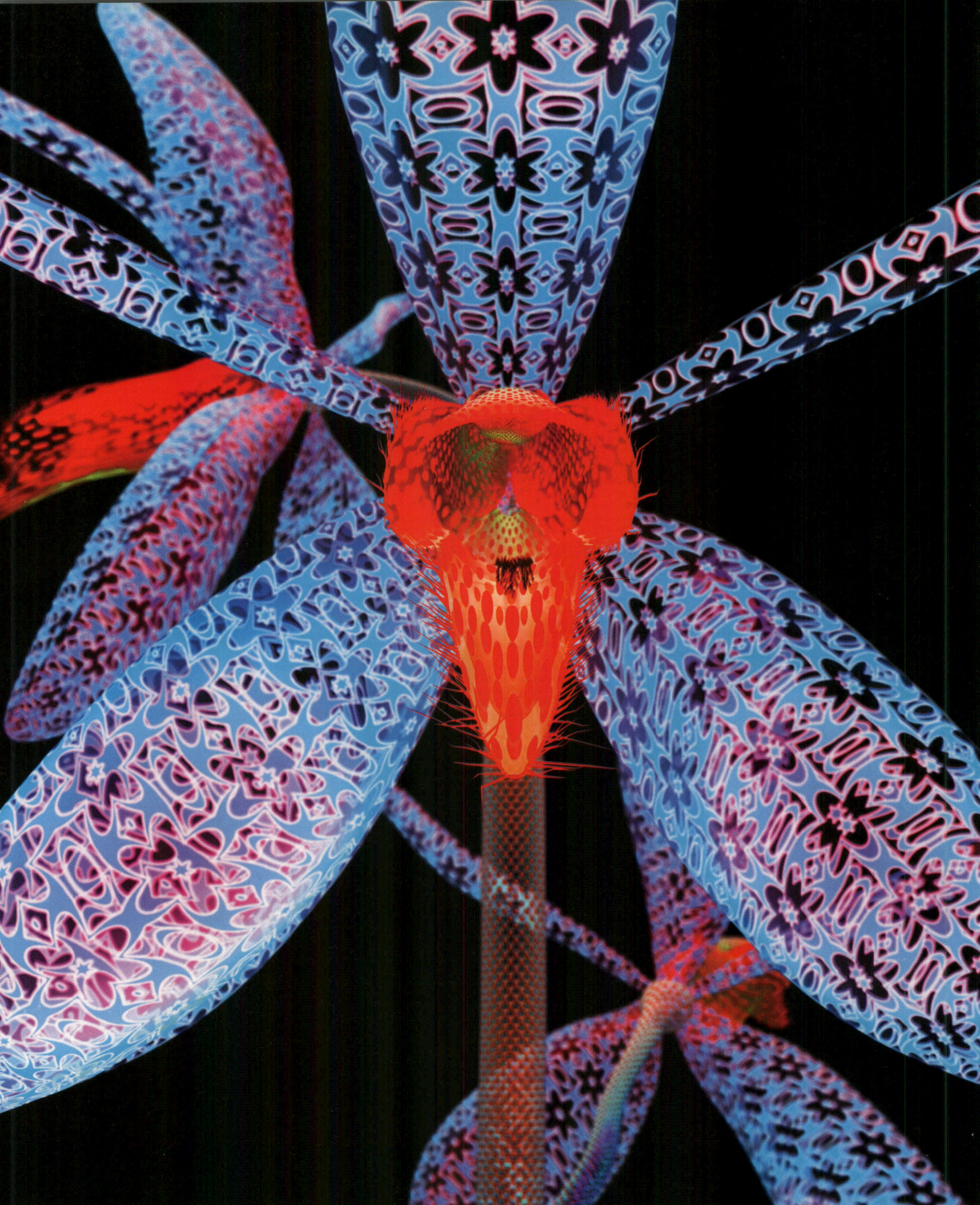
4 From this point, you can apply other Blur filters to increase the illustrative look of the image. Duplicate the layer and go to Filter>Blur>Smart Blur, set the Radius to 100, Threshold to 100, Quality to High and Mode to Edge Only. This creates an inverted black-and-white line effect.



5 Invert the layer by pressing Ctrl/Cmnd+I, then set the layer to Soft Light. Duplicate this layer and run the Gaussian Blur filter at 10 pixels. Go to Image>Adjustments>Auto Contrast to increase the contrast and set the Opacity to 50 per cent.



6 Duplicate the Background layer and apply the Gaussian Blur filter again at 10 pixels. Set the layer to Overlay to lift the colours, increase the contrast a little and add some depth to the final image. You can experiment even further with this technique to create more unusual effects. ca>p



Profile: Me Company

From Icelandic pop icon Björk to Japanese robot manufacturers, Me Company's clients are all after the same thing: "It's the element of magic," says founder Paul White.

Paul White set up Me Company way back in 1985, pulling together the various threads of his creative endeavours up to that point. Shortly after putting a name to an enterprise focused largely on the music business, Me Company found its decisive partnership with the diva of the North Atlantic, Björk.

Nearly 20 years later, the partnership with Björk continues to bear fruit, but has been added to by names such as Nike, Kenzo, Ford and Lancôme. The ranks have swelled and the technology has shifted up several gears, but the philosophy remains the same. "We operate a policy of pleasing ourselves," explains Paul. "We'd be faking it if we didn't stick with our principles."

Exotic space

Me Company's work, which somehow hints at a technological fairy-tale world we all dream of visiting, starts with a story. Talking about the process in relation to a set of textile designs currently being worked up for "a French luxury bag manufacturer", Paul White explains: "Most of the process just involves talking."

The core team of Ross, Jess and Paul sit down and discuss the project: "We ascertain what's interesting about it then decide on what direction to steer the thing." At this early stage, the direction of a project is decided by feeling towards the character of the job.

"We almost thrash out a little story with characters," says Paul, attempting to convey the experience. Not quite happy with that, he adds: "But not in the traditional sense." Once this story has been laid down, the ideas are developed, giving them a palette of ideas to work with. From this palette, Me Company draws its 'exotic geometry'.

Musical youth

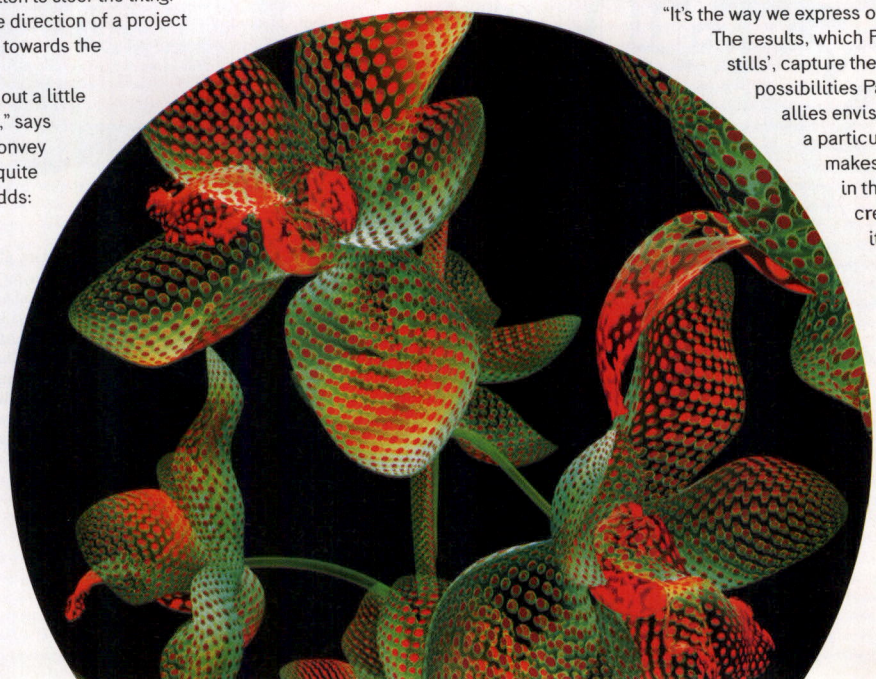
"For 12 years we did nothing but music," says Paul, who was involved in the setting up of the One Little Indian record label. Already working in the field, producing graphics "which everyone thought were computer generated, but weren't", Paul's work began to circle ever more tightly around the music scene of the late 80s.

Given the nature of the music business at that time, the potential for disaster was huge. But, sure-footed as he was, Paul began a creative partnership which lasted nearly 20 years. "Probably the most interesting projects I've been involved with came from the long-running relationship with Björk," he enthuses.

From the sleeve artwork Me Company delivered for the Sugar Cubes' first UK single, through the techno-polar bear of *Hunter* and down to the stunning artwork of her recent *Homogenic* album, this has been a very fruitful relationship.

"It was great fun, creatively very free and I liked them a lot as people," says Paul, perhaps a little dewy-eyed. But the course of true love never runs smooth: "As in most music business relationships it's the middle men that cause the problems."

Although the Me Company-Björk axis continues, the emphasis has shifted. "I got tired of the music industry itself," explains Paul. "I had enough of hearing the same bullshit from people that seemed to be getting progressively younger."



Above: Amazingly, scenes like this for Kenzo often aren't composited at all but constructed as a single environment. "Sometimes we might render the odd extra pass," says Paul, "but that's quite rare."

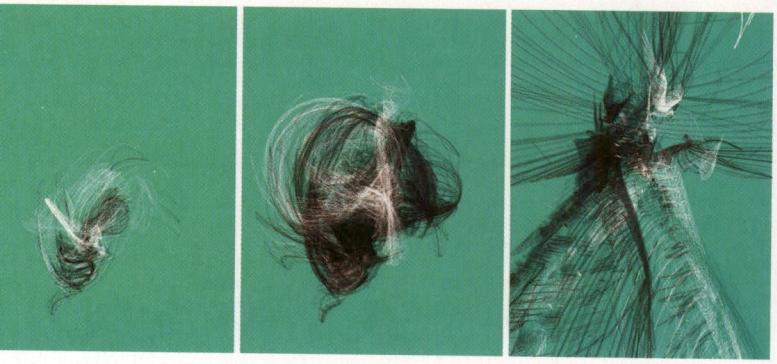
Left and far-left: Work for Numero, Paris, showing off the delicate hand of Me Company's artists, largely drawn from more traditional backgrounds than 3D.

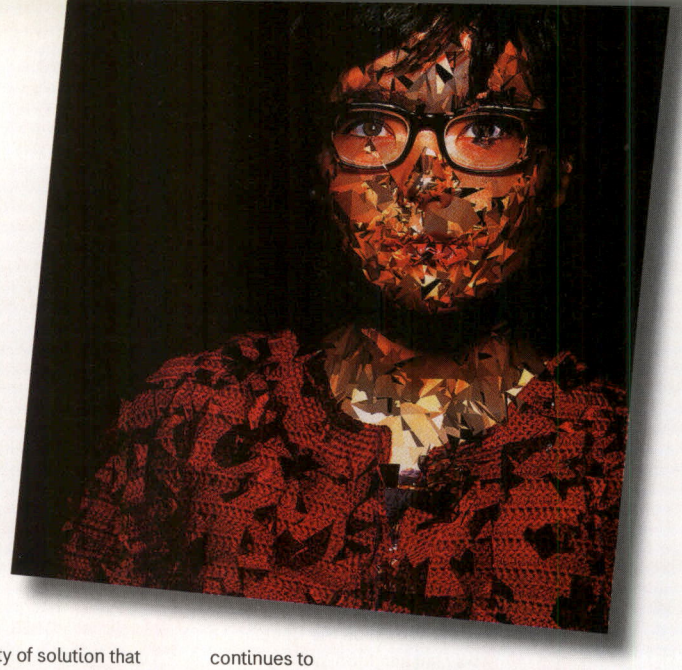
Another dimension

Although the majority of Me Company's output is in two dimensions, the production process involves three, "*XSI* is our illustration tool of choice," says Paul. "It's the way we express our ideas."

The results, which Paul calls 'hi-res stills', capture the world of possibilities Paul and his creative allies envision in response to a particular brief. What makes this work is a faith in the value of the creative process itself: "We follow a line that interests us and try hard to push things forward."

The move to 3D was an early choice for Paul: "As soon as I picked up something with a reasonable ›





Above: Demonstrating Me Company's seriously cool credentials, this series of images are studies based on the movement of caged birds, produced for Lanvin, Paris.

Top right: This portrait of Björk was produced for the Icelandic pop star's debut feature film *Dancer in the Dark*. The creative relationship with Me Company continues but at a greater dilution.

rendering engine I was transfixed." That package was the now antique *Infini-D*, the Mac's 3D bridgehead – "It had a really sweet little rendering engine," Paul recalls. While it was far from perfect, *Infini-D* was a brave new world for Paul so he threw himself into it: "The very idea of ray tracing is absolutely incredible; I found it fascinating."

The fact that this route to design and illustration is so rarely travelled is still a mystery: "We couldn't understand why other people weren't as mad about it as we were. All the early Björk, the Carl Cox and Riki Tik stuff was done with *Infini-D*."

Strange attractor

Though the practicalities may involve 3D, the backgrounds that make up Me Company are varied; what pulls them together is a shared aesthetic. Ross (Maria Rossmina Urien Lopez de Castro) joined Me Company after completing a BA and MA in fine art.

"I'm a 3D modeller now but my background is in painting," Ross explains. "I came to Me Company because I was interested in the aesthetics. It's never been just about pretty pictures for me." The depth of content which drew Ross has, over time, built up a team with an extremely broad range of talents: writers, painters and sculptors.

"Clients come to us because we can solve a problem or give a quality of solution that will help them succeed," explains Paul. "Sometimes we've had a client and wondered why they wanted us for the job!" The answer is the same whatever aspect of Me Company they're after: "It's that element of magic."

Hiding away

"We were recently asked by a big client where we'd been hiding away all this time," relates Paul with a tone of incredulity, "I was flabbergasted." For anyone with a lower profile than Me Company, the situation can only be more difficult.

"There's a lot of good stuff around at the moment," says Paul, "but a lot of it fails to get the exposure." Fortunately, this doesn't hold Me Company back – its repertoire continues to expand, currently far enough to take in the development of a Japanese domestic security robot...

The company in question, Tmsuk, came to Me Company with a working set of tolerances and the underlying machinery in place, and the brief was to design a suitable exterior. "We were interested in character," says Paul, "but in a strongly reductive way." The final solution, out in May next year, uses lighting to suggest mood.

"We wanted something that would be comfortable in the home. We were aiming for somewhere in between furniture and robot, a kind of hybrid of the two," adds Ross, as if this might prevent the machine from going berserk and destroying civilisation. "We don't consciously search ›

Me Company plays up the Manga style for Numero, Paris. Fashion editorial doesn't always get work of this quality. Just as well, because Me Company don't mess about: "It's fine if people don't like it, we operate a policy of pleasing ourselves."

Left: The relationship with Kenzo produced some fantastic imagery, some of it incredibly baroque.

Right: Created for an exhibition at Berlin's Speilhaus Morrison gallery in 2003, this image shows off Me Company's darker side.

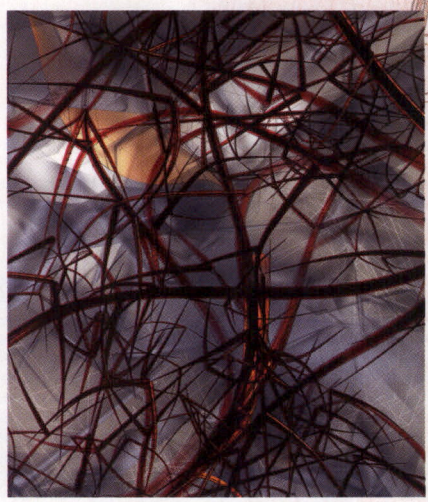
Luminous planetarium project

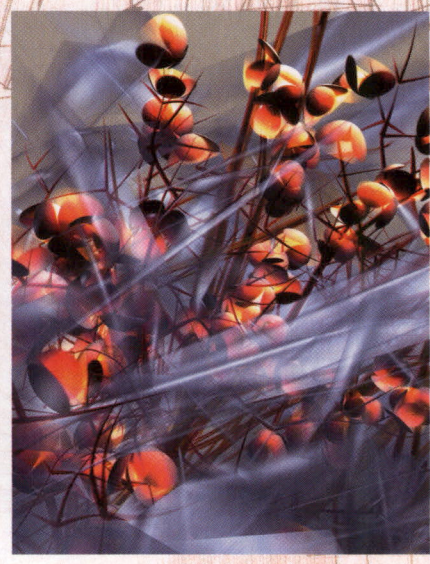
Japanese *Gas* captures Me in motion...

It sounds like the opening to a film: "The *Luminous* book coincided with an exhibition in 2001 at a disused planetarium in the Ginza district of Tokyo." Following hot on the heels of *Luminous*, Me Company appeared in Tokyo to show its work, initially says Paul, considering a very standard approach to the project.

"We started off thinking we'd do a series of slides and just talk over them," he recalls. "But eventually this evolved into an animated sequence of images." In time-honoured fashion this was done with moments to spare: "We put the whole thing together in two weeks... there were a lot of late nights."

The makers of *Gas*, the influential Japanese series of design books, were present at the event and wanted to turn the show into a DVD. The final film is a meditative piece of visual experimentation, which captures in motion the colour and form that characterises Me Company's output.





These images are taken from Me Company's work for the Luminous exhibition, Tokyo 2001.

Right: This is taken from a pair of images used by Softimage to dress the packaging for *XSI 4.0*.

out new things, but if they seem interesting, we'll take them on."

Don't look back

2001 saw the release of *Luminous*, the first Me Company book. "It was a snapshot of our work at the time," says Paul, keen to avoid any idea that it might be a summing up. "We steadfastly resisted the idea of an anthology."

This attitude seems to be a thread running through the Me Company philosophy. "Our work evolves, you always draw on your past. But there comes a point where the age of the work makes it pointless checking." The direction is very definitely forwards.

It seems there's a ground-up commitment to each project, something reflected in the working practice: "A lot of people do render passes and layers, but I like to compose the scene as a single 3D environment, light it and alter it in that state." This is a demanding approach and Paul's willing to admit that, "When we get pilloried by time issues, it's hard to maintain the pressure." But they do and the results are amazing. ca-p

To find out more about Me Company, visit **[w]** www.mecompany.com.

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Recreating traditional effects

Sometimes graphic design work demands the use of photographic elements and real textures. Use *Photoshop* to prepare halftones and bitmaps, and bring it all together in *FreeHand*...

There was a time when photographic images had to be created for press by converting them into dots using a screen. This process meant areas of graduated tone were defined by one-colour dots and lines to give the illusion of greys.

Today, these effects can be created within *Photoshop* through the Bitmap option. This process can lead to fantastic results and enables you to include real textures, define graphic styles to photographic imagery or hark back to the glory days of photo-mechanical reproduction.

We show you how to create your own halftones and prepare them as bitmaps for use in *FreeHand*. Bitmaps are one of the most flexible and versatile processes that can be applied within design; combined with *FreeHand*'s features for handling bitmaps, they're great for adding life to your work. These tips should give you the confidence to explore further and learn to love bitmaps for the endless possibilities they can inspire.

Expertise provided by Ginzberg **[e]** ginzberg@ntlworld.com.

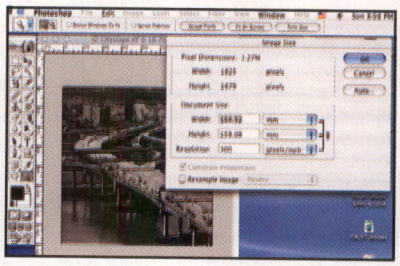
All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be found on the cover CD in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Halftones folder.

Part 1: Size and resolution

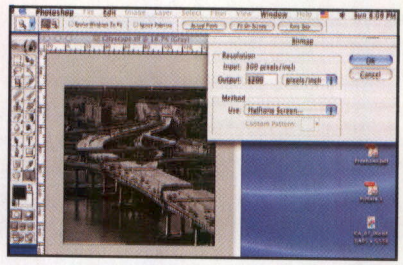
We begin by running through some simple resolution rules needed when preparing images...

Halftone filters

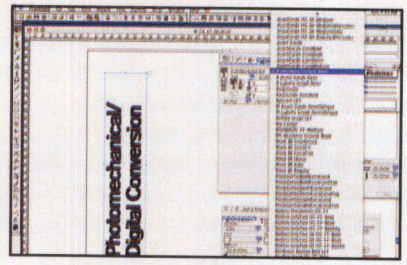
Within *Photoshop* there's the option to make halftones using a filter (Filter>Sketch). It's a bit clumsier than using the bitmap process and doesn't give you the flexiblity, but does have the Concentric Circle screen that can give a good effect to the right subject. You could always use these tools for their effect then turn them into a bitmap for use outside *Photoshop*.



1 Bitmaps can be forgiving if your original image is not of very high quality, and halftones can be a good way of disguising poor image resolution. However, you should ensure that the image is the correct physical size (300dpi) before you begin bitmapping so that you have the most control over the elements. This means you can re-scale them without too much fear of the bitmap pixelating.



2 A common mistake when creating bitmaps through the Bitmap mode in *Photoshop* is to leave their output resolution at 300dpi as you would with a normal print image. Increase this to 1200dpi so you can get as much resolution as possible into the image and avoid the obvious pixelated characteristics of bitmaps.



3 The first element we're going to make is the halftoned text running down the far left. In *FreeHand*, set the text to the size you want on the page, then copy it. Now go to *Photoshop*, create a new greyscale file set at 300dpi and paste the text into it.

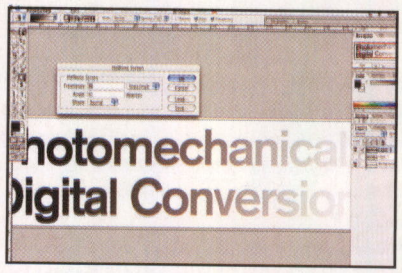
Part 2: Halftoned type and images

Use simple *Photoshop* tools to build halftones and replicate a graduating tone...

Colour Halftone

You'll find the Colour Halftone option under Filter>Pixelate. This filter will break an image into the print colours of CMYK and give you the image as it would be put together using separations. You can edit its settings for your desired result – as with all these processes, experiment to get the result you want and gain confidence using these tools.

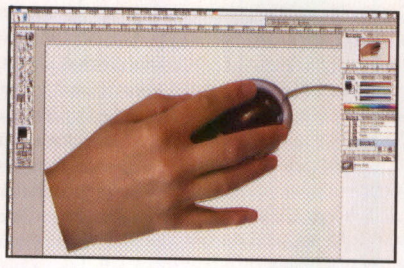
1 Select the text by clicking on its layer while holding down the Ctrl/Cmnd key. Now create a new layer and fill the selection with a gradient running from black to 30-per-cent black across the text from left to right. This is to give you a range of tones for the halftone to work with, which is fundamental to creating halftones – if it was flat black, it would have no tones to break into dots.



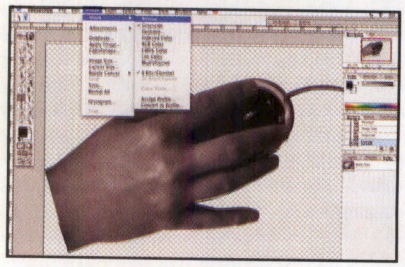
2 Now with your type filled, go to Image>Mode and then Bitmap. In the dialog box, set the resolution at 1200dpi and select Halftone Screen to set its characteristics. A high Frequency value will give you a fine screen, while a low value will give you a coarse screen. Set this to 60, set the Angle to 45 degrees and its Shape to Round.

3 The text is now made up of dots. This gives the illusion of a graduating tone as if it's been through a traditional screened process. The image is also now a Bitmap, so it's only made of black or white pixels. Save this as a .tif and not a .bmp. This process is the basis of how to create the remaining halftones and bitmaps used in the illustration.

4 Open the MouseHand.jpg file from the cover CD. You only need the actual hand and mouse, because any background will only confuse their shape when it comes to putting a screen through the image. Use the Pen tool to trace a tight path around the hand and mouse.



5 Once you're happy with your path, duplicate the layer, and make it a selection through the Paths contextual menu (you'll find it off the menu at the top-right). Now invert it (Ctrl/Cmnd+I) and delete the surrounding background.



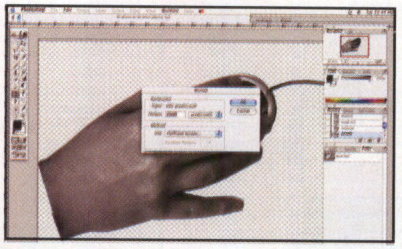
6 Convert the image to Greyscale. Halftones work best with good contrast within an image. Bring up the Levels menu (Ctrl/Cmnd+L) and tweak them to get a suitable but strong contrast between light and dark. You can also use the Brightness/Contrast tool under Image>Adjustments.

Part 3: Traditional halftone

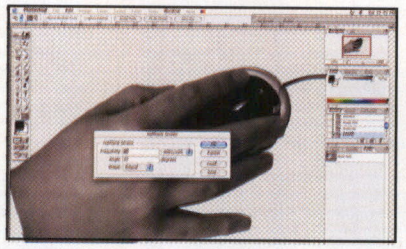
In this part, create a traditional halftone using a dot screen...

Experiment

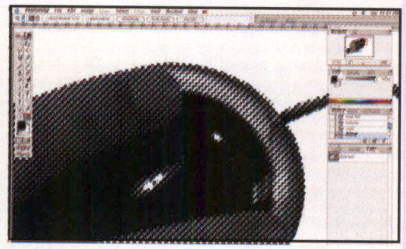
When you're bitmapping your images, try using different settings. Sometimes the wildest choices give the best results and suit the image better. Also try different combinations – what may work well for one screen does not for others. Halftones are the original way of reproducing images – take a look at design from the 60s and the 70s (before modern DTP) to spark ideas.



1 Now go to the Bitmap option and select the Halftone Screen option. You're still going to use a dot on this image, but you could look at a line halftone as well. Remember that if you're not happy with the results of the halftone, simply press Ctrl/Cmnd+Z to try again.



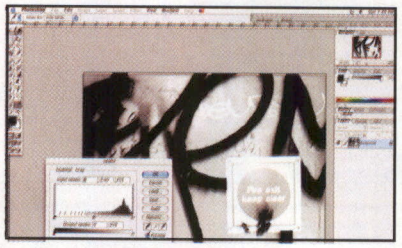
2 In the Halftone Screen dialog, select 60 lines per inch to get a good range of tone. Keep the Angle at 45 degrees and use the Round dots.



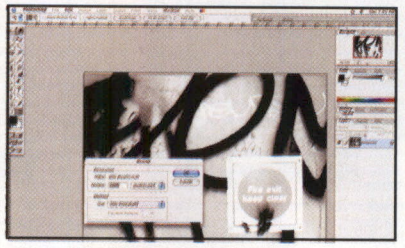
3 You can see here that the results give you a clean halftone with a good range of tone and not much loss of detail. There's also enough coarseness so that when reproduced at the same size or enlarged, the dots will be clearly visible. Again save the file as a .tif for use in *FreeHand*.

Part 4: Unrefined bitmaps

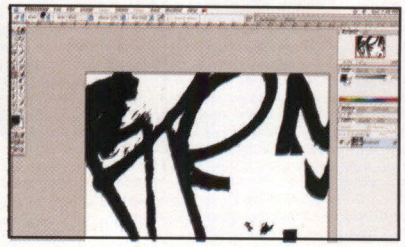
Now produce a quick photographic texture for use in *FreeHand*...



1 Sometimes you need simple bitmaps that suggest photographic elements within your work. Open the file Texture_1.jpg on the CD. This is just a photo of some street graffiti but does have a nice rough mark to it. As before, tweak the levels until you're happy with the contrast.



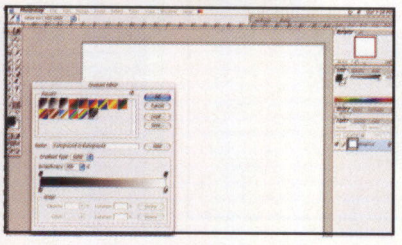
2 Go to the Bitmap option as before. This time, though, set its characteristics to 50 per cent Threshold. This translates the image crudely, but it does have its own rough quality.



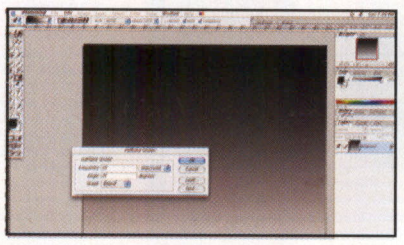
3 There are now no grey tones within the image. There's little subtlety – it's very stark, only black and white. This process of cutting out messy greys gives you good strong marks, which is handy if you only want flat areas of colour.

Part 5: Halftone sheets

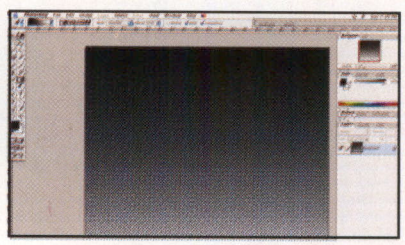
Here's an easy way to make style sheets of halftones for various uses...



1 In the old days, you had to buy rubdown sheets of graduating tones. Modern DTP has changed that for good, but you still need that resource. Create a greyscale file of 100x100mm and fill it with a black-to-white gradient from top to bottom.



2 Go to the Bitmap palette. Choose Halftone Screen and reduce the Frequency to just 30. You want to create a very coarse screen so it can really take hold within the gradient. Also, select the dot (or Round Shape) to begin with.



3 Now you have a sheet of graduating tone that you can use in numerous ways and keep as a master in your scrapbook. You can also make other sheets, using greater frequency or, instead of the dot process, try lines. Build yourself a little library.

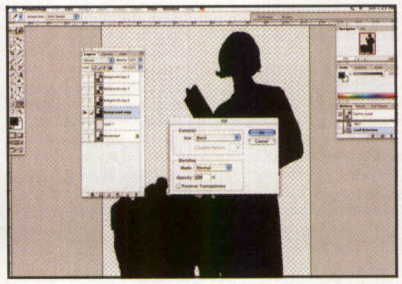
Part 6: Layered bitmaps

Prepare an image to be broken into tones and rebuilt in *FreeHand*...

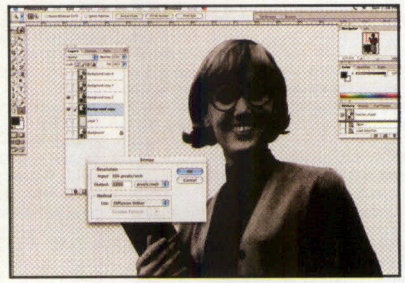
Combinations

Try to combine your bitmaps. They enable you to use numerous 'real' or photographic elements that you'd otherwise be trying to piece together in memory-hungry *Photoshop*. They are flat areas of colour just like normal vector objects, and you wouldn't think about joining those together.

1 Open the file Teacher.tif. You're now going to break this image into tones to be put back together in *FreeHand*. Duplicate the image layer three times. In turn, tweak the levels on the top two layers so you get a layer of midtone and the top layer is just strong shadows.

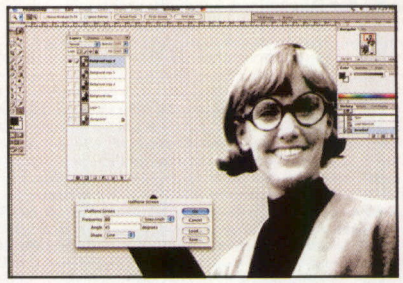


2 On the third bottom layer trace the outline of the image and fill it with black. This will be the base tone and so must be a flat area of colour. With all the other layers turned off, save as Layer 3.tif. Then, in the History menu, dump the bitmap and you'll be back to the unflattened psd.



3 On the midtone layer, go to the Bitmap Option and use the Diffusion Dither. Save as Layer 2.tif. Also, dump the last bitmap action to return to the unflattened image again. If you use this system, you can work quickly off one file and retain it as a master psd.

4 If you look at the results from the Diffusion Dither option, you'll notice you get an image with a sense of gradual tone made with fine random dots. This gives the image a diffused appearance, and is handy when you need to keep tonal values but don't want an obvious screen involved.

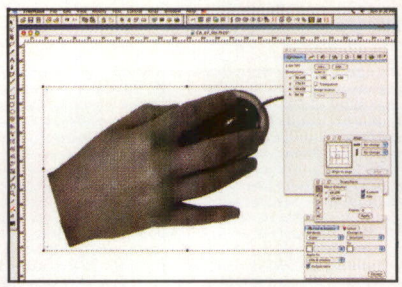


5 On the last and top layer, you should have the image just with strong shadows. Using the Halftone process through Bitmap, select the Line option, 45 degrees and 60 lines.

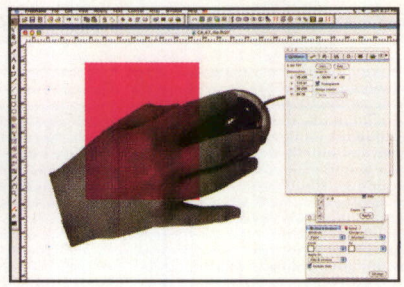
6 This gives you a defined image for what will be the shadow and darkest tone when the image is put back together. This last filter is quite popular these days and you get a nostalgic look... when halftones were really halftones!

Part 7: FreeHand versatility

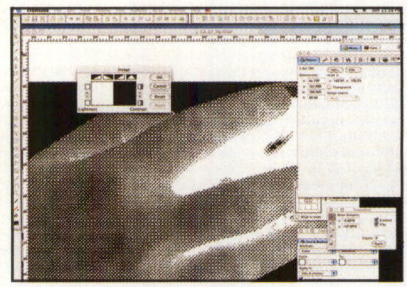
Bring bitmaps into *FreeHand* and see its versatile handling of them...



1 Now you can start bringing all your created bitmaps into *FreeHand* and build up your image. Remember that *FreeHand* enables you to have enormous freedom with these images. Use Ctrl/Cmnd+R to import the image MouseHand.tif from the cover CD.



2 Select the image and go to the Object Inspector. Check the Transparent box. Everything that is white (or off) in the image becomes transparent, leaving just the black. If you do this to a normal greyscale tif then *FreeHand* struggles to make a clean calculation – that's why you need to put your images through the process in *Photoshop* first.

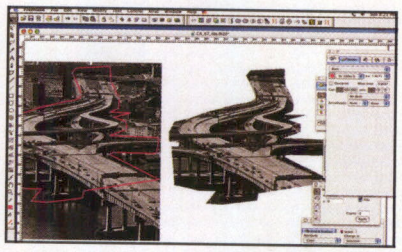


3 You can also invert the black and white in *FreeHand*. The Edit option in the Object Inspector brings up a palette where by simply clicking on the top left boxes the image will swap its black and white values. This is handy for overlaying or knocking images out of a background.

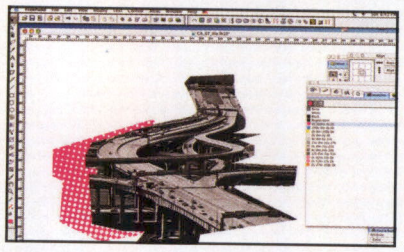
FreeHand versatility continued...

Redraw

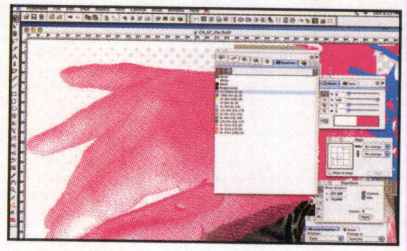
Sometimes you can be drawing on a lot of memory if you redraw a lot of images in *FreeHand*, especially if they have the transparency options on. If you go to FreeHand Preferences> Redraw, there's the option to use less memory, display images at a lower preview rate and speed up your work. It also makes crashes less likely



4 You can start putting the bitmapped images and textures together using *FreeHand*. If you want to crop an image crudely, simply draw out the box over your image. Then cut the image, select the box and then Paste Inside. You can now edit its cropping without ever altering the master image.



5 Also, you can now start combining bitmaps easily. By simply drawing another loose box shape, import one of the halftone style sheets that you made for your scrapbook earlier. Now paste this inside your new box then bring the first image to the front (Ctrl/Cmnd+F) to get added depth.



6 Another benefit of working with these types of images is that you can colour them with a flat colour as you wish. Select an imported bitmap, choose a colour from your swatches and the image will be recoloured as specified. This quality is handy when designing with spot colours.

Part 8: Layered bitmaps

Putting the layered bitmaps back together to create a tonal image...

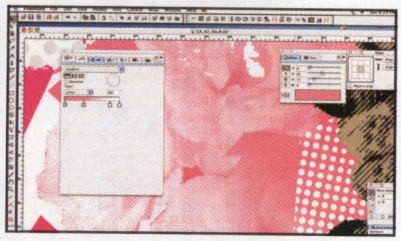
1 Import the three bitmaps of the teacher. You should have the three tones made from three different bitmap processes. Select each one in turn and make it transparent. Order them so the Line version is in front, the solid Threshold is at the back, and the midtone Diffusion is between.

2 Now colour them. This is where you have to think a little in reverse – the solid becomes the lightest and base colour, and the Line becomes the darkest and defining colour. Here the mixes are: 0c 0m 15y 25k, 17c 0m 33y 51k and Black.

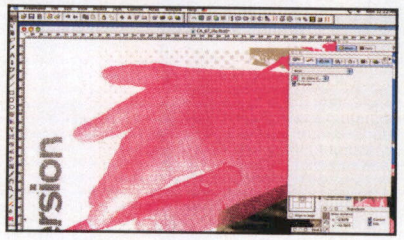
3 Again, combining *FreeHand* with *Photoshop* in a good system pays off. If you select all three images and use the Align tool and set both options to Align centre, the images will position themselves in register. This is because you made all your layers off the one Master file in *Photoshop*.

Part 9: The finishing post

Combine vector tools and effects with your bitmaps to complete your project...



1 In *FreeHand* you can trace a shape within the bitmap and fill this with the Gradient tool under the Fill Inspector. This gives greater depth to your images and makes the bitmap appear printed over the top of your fills or blended into the base colour, making more seductive imagery.



2 Bitmaps can be filled with a selected flat colour, so they can have extra print techniques added to them. In the Fill Inspector, you can set the colour to Overprint adding another layer of translucency. It won't show the normal Overprint Alert Pattern of little zeros within its fill, so keep an eye on this.

3 You've now seen how much can be done with basic bitmap techniques and the quality they can bring to your work. *FreeHand* is excellent at enabling you to creatively work with these objects whether through their positioning, combining, resizing or colouring and effects. CAP

TIP'S

60 PHOTOSHOP FILTER TIPS

Photoshop's filters have become more sophisticated with every new release of the software. Using *Photoshop CS*, we show you some essential techniques for using filters in your illustrations...

Photoshop's filters can be an invaluable resource for any illustrator or designer. One of the greatest advantages of the filters is that they help you create things that would normally take you ages to reproduce with just the tools in *Photoshop* or by other conventional methods. However, one of the great disadvantages of filters is that the results are so recognisable as filter effects. You know the classic cases: too much Lens Flare, dodgy rendered clouds, too much drop shadow and the overuse of ZigZag for ripple effects.

Over the following pages, you'll find 60 tips for using filters more creatively. Some of the subjects we cover are colour correction, 3D effects, ways to make your images more toon-like and retro, and how to get more out of the Liquify filter. There are also a few tips that don't use filters but act in such a way that they're like using a filter.

Words provided by Jason Cook **[w]** www.jc@jacey.com.
Illustration by Nessim Higson **[w]** www.iamalwayshungry.com.

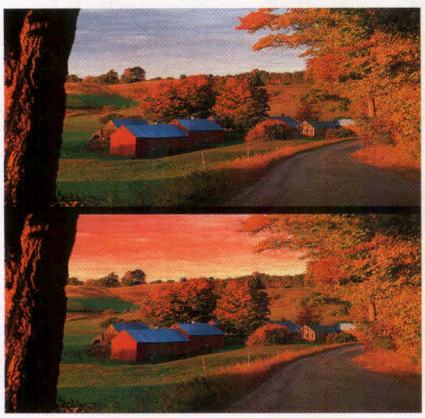
LIQUIFY AND EXTRACT TIPS

Say no to ZigZag

Using either the clockwise or anti-clockwise Twirl tool, you can twist pixels in those directions. A larger brush works well with these. Use the Twirl tool instead of the ZigZag filter or Swirl filter, to create subtle and more controlled effects.

Sky colouring

The Extract filter can help with colour correction. Here we've isolated the blue sky from the autumn landscape and, using the Highlight tool set to a small brush size, have drawn around the sky where it meets the trees and horizon. Having done that, we used colour balance to give the sky a warm feel. Before you do this, it's best to duplicate the original image as a second layer and then, when you've applied the Extract filter, you can amend the sky so it sits over the original layer and its sky.

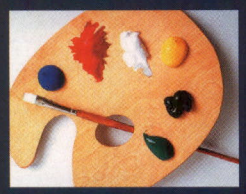


You can change the colour of the sky to match the hues in the rest of the image.

TIP TO REMEMBER 2

Paint smudge

This is one of the stock images that comes on the *Photoshop CS* CD, in the Goodies section. Using the Warp tool, give the brush size the same pixel dimensions as the brush on the image and set the density to 100 per cent to replicate a brush being pressed hard on a palette. Then, using the Liquify filter, you can easily simulate the paint daubs being pushed by the brush. See the red and white daubs on the image for the effect.



The Liquify filter can be used to accurately simulate paint being smeared on a canvas or palette.

Smart Highlighting

This Extract option keeps the highlighting on the edge so you can use it when the foreground and background edges are of similar colours. Smart Highlighting enables you to apply the minimum amount of paint necessary to cover edges.

Flaming distortions

Create a black background and paint a line with a soft edge in yellow, then do an orange one on top of the previous paint stroke and offset it slightly. Open the Liquify filter and use the Warp tool to push and pull flames from the two paint strokes. The Warp tool blends the two colours together.

Distorted faces

Making caricatures is easy with the tools in the Liquify menu. In the 1970s, Ralph Steadman used to scratch and engrave on polaroids to make satirical caricatures of the famous. Now you can do this with the Liquify filter. Try elongating someone's nose with the Warp tool, or use the Bloat tool to enlarge their eyes.

iPod madness

Here we've recreated the iPod adverts using the Extract filter. Use the Highlight tool to draw around the man and then use the Fill tool to fill in the element to generate a mask. Click OK. Then use the 'lock transparency layer' feature in the Layers palette to fill in the foreground and the background with different colours.

Create colourful silhouette effects using the Extract filter, Highlight tool and 'lock transparency layer' feature.

Depth of field

If you've got a vase of flowers on a table in the foreground of an image and the rest of the room in the background, duplicate the layer. Open the top layer in the Extract filter dialog box and isolate the vase and flowers. Click OK and Gaussian Blur the bottom layer to give the illusion of depth of field. Clone out the vase and flowers in the layer you're blurring so you don't get a halo effect around the extracted part.

Twirly clouds

Here you can see how the Liquify tool is great for generating whimsical clouds. Use a combination of the Twirl and Bloat tools to spread the edges of the white airbrush strokes and then use the Warp tool to push the edges, giving a feathered effect to the clouds.

Create swirling cloud effects with fluid airbrush strokes and Warp tool touches.

Basic extraction

The Extract filter is useful for isolating a foreground object from the background. It can help in making sophisticated selections. Use it for intricate and undefinable edges, because it can be much quicker than using the Pen tool and trying to create complicated clipping paths. When you paint around the edge of an object with the Brush tool, the edge loses its colour parts, which are part of the original background. The Extract filter helps you to blend a new background without having the halo effect of the original background.

COLOUR TIPS

Photo Filter

Under Image>Adjustments>Photo Filter, this neat filter helps you to do away with fiddling with Colour Balance or Hue/Saturation. The options replicate the effect of putting a coloured filter in front of a camera. If you're working with a portrait shot of a figure and its overall colour cast and tone is cool, you can select one of the warm filters in Photo Filter to soften the image.

Deepest shadows

The Shadow/Highlight command under Image>Adjustments is a speedy way of correcting an image. Don't mess around with levels to fix your dark and bright areas in an image; simply use this command to fix the problem. The classic case where you might use this is a silhouetted figure against a bright sky. This command brings back some detail in the figure. You can even try it on your completed illustration – if it's gone too dark and murky in places, this might bring some balance back to it.

Saturate instantly

A simple way to saturate an image is to make a duplicate layer, and, on the top layer, set the blending mode to Overlay. As with *Photoshop*, there are a hundred ways to do the same thing, but this is one of the quickest. The left-hand side of this image has the Overlay effect on it. The right side is the original image.

Selected greyscale

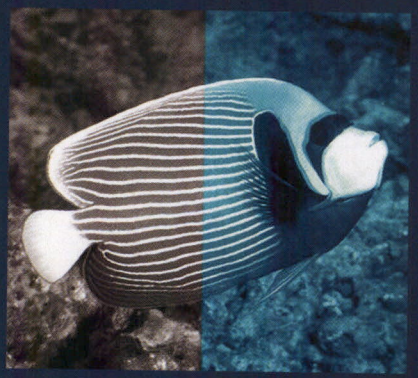
To isolate an object from its background, make the background greyscale and leave the foreground object in colour. Draw a path around the foreground object with the Pen tool, ensuring that the 'Subtract from path area' button is checked. Then select Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Hue/Saturation, and use the Hue/Saturation dialog box to desaturate the background colour. The foreground colour will remain the same.

Halftoning

Take an image and then convert it to greyscale in the Image>Mode menu. Then convert it to bitmap. Now you can explore the halftoning options. Find the desired effect and click OK. Now you can use Colour Range to isolate and make a selection of the black or the white areas and then overlay this image on the original one. Use Transparency Lock to fill in the selection with a colour and then apply a blending mode to get a patterned colour over the original image.

Controlled duotone

Rather than using the duotone feature in *Photoshop*, use this method for a more visual way of applying a duotone to an image. Take an image and make it greyscale. Create a new layer and fill it with your desired colour, then reduce the layer's Opacity to around 30 per cent and change the blending mode to Colour or Soft. Now use Hue/Saturation to change the colour of this layer until you achieve the desired effect.



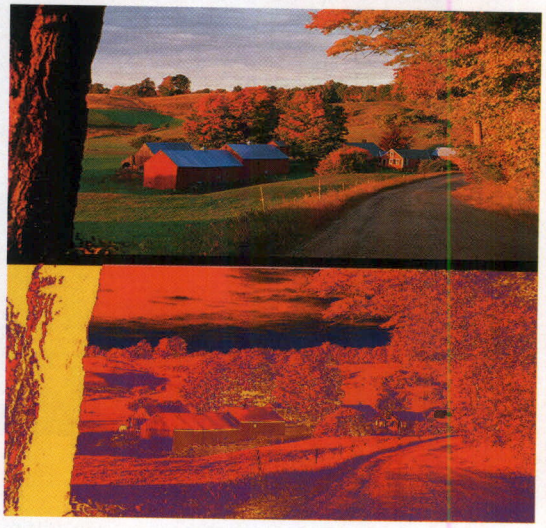
Take more control over the creation of duotone images by making them greyscale and filling them with colour.

Saturated softness

Take an image and duplicate the layer, set the blending mode to Overlay, reduce the Opacity to around 70 per cent and then slightly Gaussian Blur that layer. This gives the overall image a soft clean saturated feel, and works wonders on illustrations that are starting to look a bit flat.

The new Solarise

Forget about using the Solarise filter; instead try using the Gradient Map under Image>Adjustments. Click on the drop-down menu to see your installed gradients, and make new ones if necessary with the Gradient tool. See how applying a muted warm gradient gives you a great-looking solarised effect.



Achieve a dramatic solarised effect by applying a muted warm gradient in the Gradient Map.

Pastel effects

Open your colour image, duplicate the layer and use the Channel Mixer to create a contrasty black-and-white image. Then gradually lower the Opacity of this layer to get the desired pastel effect on the overall image. This works fast on skin tones if you want that old weathered feeling to an image. Again, try using Gaussian Blur to soften it.

Red eye colour correction

Got a photograph of a person or animal you want to use but they've got red eye. You can use the colour replacement tool to change the red colour. Or you can create a new layer over the original image, zoom in to the eye and paint a black colour over the red with a soft brush. You can then change the blending mode for this layer to Colour.

RETRO TIPS

Quick pixel art

To generate a simple pixel-art effect, use the Filter>Pixelate>Mosaic filter, then apply the Diffuse layer and use the Unsharp Mask to sharpen it. Create a new layer and use the Line tool to draw around the edges, switch off anti-alias and apply the same filter you did for the previous layer.

Create a pixelated effect on your images quickly by using the Mosaic filter and a touch of the Line tool.

Pretend vector art

This is an old favourite with many an illustrator. Use the Cutout filter to generate flat areas of colour. Once applied, use the Diffuse filter, and then apply the Unsharp Mask filter. The simpler the image you use in terms of colour and texture, the better the result.

Graduated retro art

Take an image of someone and apply Threshold. Find the desired effect and click OK. Then apply the Diffuse filter and select Anisotropic. Then click OK and apply Unsharp Mask just to help make the image sharper. Now create a new layer over this layer, add a funky gradient and switch the blending mode to Hard Light.

Funky gradients can be used to add a retro 80s look to your portrait pictures.

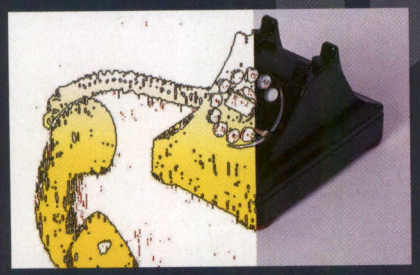
TIP TO REMEMBER

Pretend 3D wireframe

Make a square document and draw a grid in it with the Line tool. Use the Elliptical Line tool to make a circle selection and use the Spherise filter to distort it. Copy your selection so it's on its own and not part of the original grid background, then place it where you want within your image.

Keyline disintegration

Another cool retro look can be achieved with the Graphic Pen filter. Once applied, select the main body of colour and use a vibrant light gradient. While the selection is still highlighted, key stroke it with a one- or two-pixel wide stroke.



The Graphic Pen filter works best if the object you're applying it to is on a white background.

Diamond bling

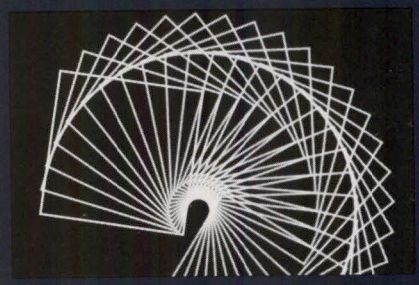
Want to create the type of diamond text you see on all the hip-hop and garage compilations these days? Create a word and keep the selection active, then go to Filter>Distort>Glass. Depending on the size of your document, this will affect the scaling settings, so experiment but use the Tiny lens in the texture drop-down menu. Once that's done, create a 3D bevel stroke around the word. Hey presto, instant bling.

TV scanlines

Import a simple black-and-white horizontal stripe in Define Pattern under the Edit menu. You can then use this as a pattern over an image that you want to make, such as a TV screen with horizontal scanlines. Once you've applied the pattern to the layer over the image layer, set the blending mode of the layer to Soft Light and you may also want to reduce the Opacity to give a more subtle effect.

Old skool electro art

Keyboard shortcuts can help generate cool effects. Here we use a shortcut to generate an old-looking computer-generated spiral effect. Fill the background layer with black and then create a new layer. Make a keylined square, duplicate it, then use Transform and slightly rotate it. Press Ctrl+Alt+Shift+T (Cmnd+Alt+Shift+T), and keep doing this until you achieve your spiral effect. Then merge all the new generated layers into one to reduce file size.



In seconds, you can create an effect that the super computers of the 70s would have taken hours to generate.

More vectoring

Take an image of a face and posterise it under Image>Adjustments. Then Gaussian Blur it slightly. Go to Unsharp Mask under Filters and sharpen it to create vector-looking artwork. You may want to use the Pen tool to make selections, and add bits of colour to the rough edges to clean it up.

Trippy inversion

Take an image and then duplicate it, making sure you're working in RGB mode. Invert the new duplicated image, which should be the top layer. Switch the layer's blending mode to Difference. This creates a subtle effect that still retains elements of the original image. Try to erase parts of the converted layer with the Eraser tool to add subtle elements of the original image.

You too can create trippy images of livestock by using the Difference blending mode in *Photoshop*.

TOON TIPS

TIP TO REMEMBER

Blended rough comic artwork

Use the Poster Edges filter under Artistic to generate rough outlined comic artwork. Keep the Posterisation setting to a minimum and the Edge Intensity low as well. But increase Edge Thickness to find the desired effect. If you keep the original image under the filtered layer, use the Eraser tool to work away part of the filtered layer so it looks like it's blending into it. This technique works well on photographic faces.

The Poster Edges filter will give your objects a rough outline, in the style of comic artwork.

Dirty ink lines

The Ink Lines filter under Artistic is a great filter to give part of your image a graphic dirty feel. Keep the stroke length to a minimum but increase the Dark Intensity and Light Intensity to nearly maximum.

Ink blots

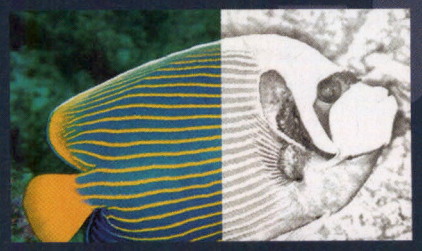
To get ink blot effects use the Paintbrush tool to apply Wet Edges and paint some black blob shapes on to a white canvas. Layer your paint strokes with another paint stroke. Then apply the Liquify tool and use the Warp tool to push and pull so the blobs look like splattered ink.

Neon edges

Open an image and apply the Glowing Edges filter, then use Hue/Saturation to colourise it so it's blue. Duplicate the layer and set it to Overlay. Then apply a slight Gaussian Blur so that the edges look like they're glowing. Once you've done that, you may want to duplicate the blurred layer to make the glow more vibrant.

Gaussian Blur pencil sketch

Take an image and desaturate it under Image>Adjustments, then duplicate the layer and invert the duplicate. Set the blending mode to Colour Dodge and use Gaussian Blur.



Gaussian Blur an inverted image and you should end up with a simple greyscale shaded pencil sketch.

Stitched effect

Open an image and duplicate the layer, then apply the Find Edges filter. Now desaturate the image and colourise it with Hue/Saturation, making it a darkish blue. Now move this layer below the coloured original layer. Using the Magic Wand, delete parts of the coloured layer so it looks as if the image has been slowly created. Flatten the image and use a small texture effect to give the impression of fabric.

Pop Art revisited

Creating Pop Art effects is easy. Open an image, preferably a head shot, make sure it has no background and is transparent. Use Threshold to get a nice contrasting black-and-white effect. Duplicate this layer and fill the head with white using Transparency Lock. Hide the layer, go back to the Threshold layer and use Colour Range to select the white areas, then delete them. Now move the white-filled layer below this one. Fill it with a colour, then fill the Threshold layer using Transparency Lock and fill with a colour. Create a new layer at the bottom of these two and fill it with a colour.

Create dramatic effects from your portrait pictures using Threshold and Transparency Lock.

Marvel sketch

Duplicate an image and apply the Emboss filter to the top layer and set it to Hard Light. You may need to change the contrast of this layer by using Levels, or switch on the Transparency Lock for this layer and then fill it with a colour such as black for a simple ink pen sketch.

Create a stylish comic-like sketch effect by using the Emboss filter and the Hard Light blending mode.

Cutout alternative

Instead of using the cutout filter, have a go with the Paint Daubs filter, keeping the brush size to a small size and the sharpness high. Once you've applied these setting, use the Smudge Stick filter to give your image an outline. Intensity should be high, with Highlight Area and Stroke set low. These two filters work best with an image on a white background.

Charcoal two-tone

When applying the Charcoal filter, set your foreground and background colours to two vibrant colours and then apply the filter to get a really nice rough screen print effect. If you increase charcoal thickness, it makes the effect heavier. Then have a go at posterising the image for a very clean graphic touch.

FUTURISTIC TIPS

1 Radial Blur

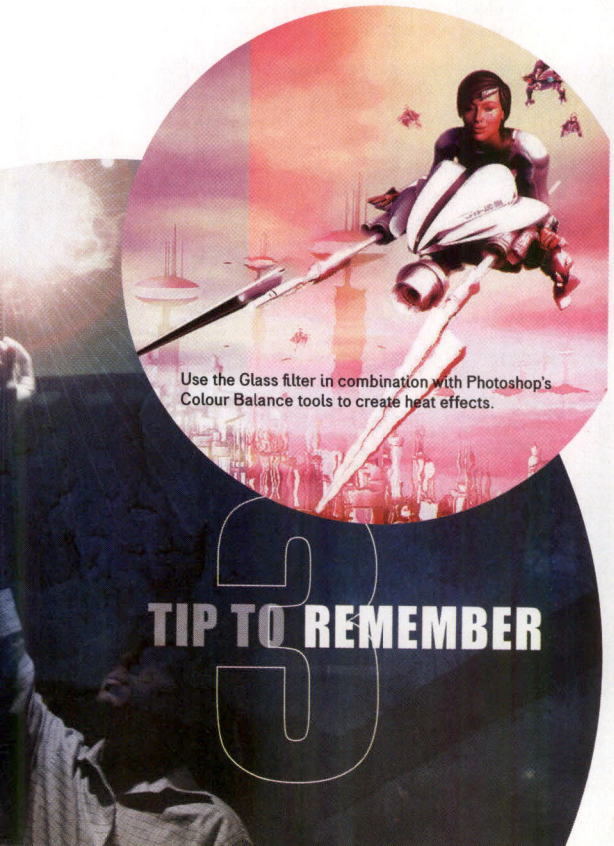
Use Radial Blur and set the Blur Method to Zoom and the Quality to Best for a simple effect. This works best on keylined objects. It provides you with an instant clean effect to your illustration to add movement and depth.

2 Lens Flaring

Avoid using Lens Flare in an obvious way. If you want to add a bit of sparkle to a science fiction illustration then use a low Brightness setting and a Lens Type of around 105mm prime. Then keep repeating the filter to generate a nice starry space background.

3 Heat effects

A great way of adding heat to your illustrations is to use the Glass filter under Filter>Distort. Open an image and duplicate it, then set your Texture to Frosted and the Distortion and Smoothness to a low setting. Keep scaling to about 75 per cent, until you get a wavey smooth distortion. Colour Balance the filtered layer to a red bias and then delete elements to show the original image below.



Use the Glass filter in combination with Photoshop's Colour Balance tools to create heat effects.

TIP TO REMEMBER

4 Fiery eyes

Open an image with a close-up of an eye and paste a chromed fire image (see Chromed fire on the right) over the top of the eye. Scale it down as necessary to fit over the iris. Use the Eraser tool to clean up the edges and then erase some of the fire so the pupil shows through, then set this layer to Hard Light. Flatten the image and add Lens Flare for a highlight. Duplicate the layer, apply a zoomed Radial Blur and set this layer to Overlay.

Add fire to eyes by combining the use of the Chrome filter with Hard Light and Overlay blending modes.

5 Brushed metal

Make a new document, select a portion of an image and use the Add Noise filter. Experiment, but make sure the Monochromatic button is ticked, then enlarge and stretch it with Transform. Crop your image so there's no white background. Then give the texture a bit of depth by using the Lighting Effects filter to cast some light across it.

6 Eye highlight

Lens Flare is great for using as a simple highlighter. Use it for bringing life to dead eyes. Render a small highlight Lens Flare in each eye on the edge of the pupil to simulate a photographer's light reflection. Even use it to highlight a figure by rendering half a Lens Flare on and off a figure, very much like the sun appearing from behind a figure.

7 Night vision

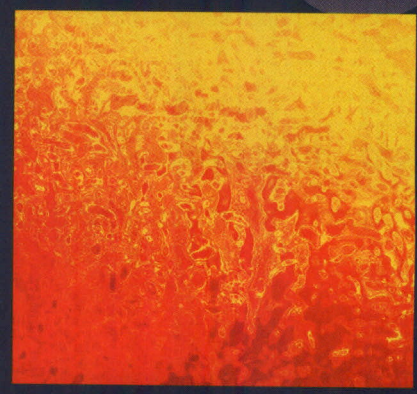
Open an image (a landscape is best) and convert it to greyscale, then convert it to duotone. Use two colours: a black or darkish green and then a vibrant green. Once they're applied, convert back to RGB mode and then use the Add Noise filter to make it a bit grainy. You may need to use Levels to make some small adjustments to give the image a vibrant feel.

8 Motion Blur edges

To make subtle Motion Blur edges, open an image and use the Pen tool to create a clipping path around the object you want to Motion Blur. Turn it into a selection. Go to Select>Modify> Contract, and, depending on the resolution of your image, set the pixels to between 2 and 15. Then click OK and go to Select>Feather and set the pixels to around 3 and click OK. Now invert the selection and apply your Motion Blur. You'll get a subtle blending, which is great for science-fiction space ships.

9 Chromed fire

Create a new document and make a number of paint marks and gradients in greyscale. Then apply the Chrome filter under Filter>Sketch, and make the Detail and Smooth options quite high. Then create a new layer and make a gradient from rich orange through to yellow, so yellow is at the top. Then set this layer's blending mode to Hard Light.



Hot chrome effects are possible by simply using the Chrome filter and a rich, colourful gradient.

10 Futuristic heat vision

Using a cityscape type of image, go to Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map and use a range of colours that goes from black, dark blue, red and then yellow and apply this to the image. Now go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise and experiment with the amount, but set the Distortion to Uniform to get instant heat vision.

3D TIPS

Instant 3D shapes

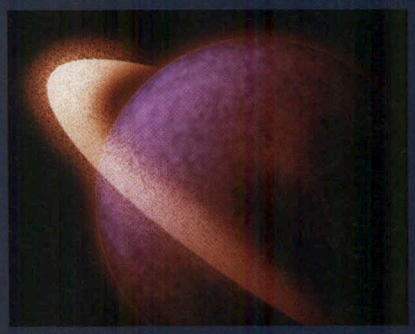
Create a graduated shape on a solid background, then press the layer effects button at the bottom of the Layers palette and highlight Bevel and Emboss. All manner of 3D styles can be achieved. By giving the depth a higher percentage, more depth can be added. But don't be restricted to just creating web buttons; create organic shapes with this filter and then incorporate them into your illustration.

3D text outlines

When using the layer styles to emboss and create 3D-style text, make multiple stroke outlines of the word or letter and emboss each stroke to give the letter or word multiple 3D elements. By adding slightly different drop shadows to the words, you can create quite a striking effect.

Planet with rings

To create an atmospheric planet with Saturn-type rings is very quick and easy. Set up a document with a black background, then make a circular selection with a dark-purple-to-black gradient in it. Add the Noise filter and then Gaussian Blur it. Create a new layer and make an elliptical selection and fill it with a gradient from white to transparent. Then use the Transform command to distort it to an angle so it looks like the image below. Use the Eraser tool to delete parts of the planet, then use the Gaussian Blur to soften it slightly. Duplicate this layer and add the Noise filter, then slightly offset it to its original layer.



It's quick and easy to create a ringed planet combining a handful of different filter effects.

Duplicated 3D cubes

A great use for the 3D Transform tool is to help you generate multiple items at slightly different angles. For example, you could have a cityscape but only a couple of buildings on the horizon. Rather than use the Clone tool to duplicate them at the same angle, use the 3D Transform tool to duplicate and slightly rotate.

Create the sun

You could use the Chromed fire tip (see left) again in conjunction with the 3D Transform filter (Filter>Render). This is a great way to create instant planets and spheres. Another great use is to create eyes for illustrations. Sometimes details in eyes can be lost in a photograph, so by making your own eye texture and then applying the 3D transform filter, you can generate sharper eyes.

Isometric pixel art

Using an isometric angle of 30 degrees with no vanishing point is a cool way to build an illustration very quickly in *Photoshop*. As there's no vanishing point with isometric perspective, you could, for example, create a Lego brick with the Line tool, fill it with gradient then apply a filter such as Cutout. By duplicating the layer in *Photoshop* you can gradually build a shape as if you were building one in the real world. By flipping the brick horizontally, you can build in the other direction.

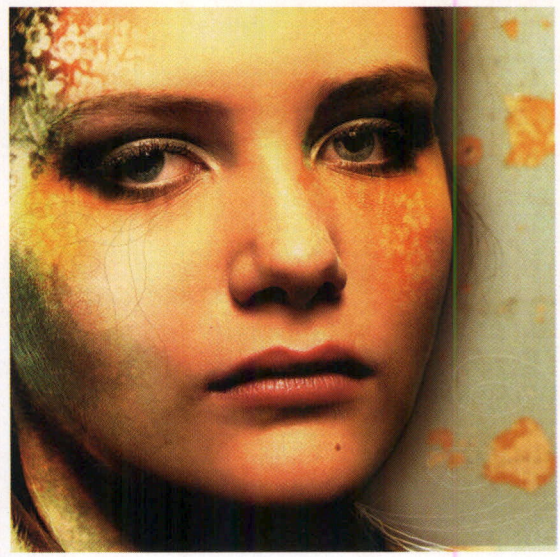
Lighting effects

Under Filter>Render, the Lighting Effects filter is very sophisticated. It helps to instantly generate depth to an illustration by creating highlights and shadows. The best way to get this to work is to use more then one light source, because one light source can just look like a gradient. Try using two spotlights from different directions and applying different properties to each light to mix the final effect. You could use this effect on the 'Planet with rings' tip on the left.

TIP TO REMEMBER 8

Drop shadow

Use Layer Style in the Layers palette to select a drop shadow. This is a simple and quick way to add depth to your illustration. Try to be subtle with it because sometimes it can look too obvious. Using it on people in photomontage illustrations helps to lift the person off the page.



Drop shadows are a simple and easy way to give the impression that objects are being lifted off the page.

Liquified 3D

The Liquify tool is another great way to simulate 3D. Try applying it to text. Use the Bloat tool to distort parts of a word. This tool can be used for many different approaches – try it on a fiery texture to give the illusion of molten lava or bubbles in oil.

Third-party plug-ins

If you look on the web, you'll come across a whole host of websites that offer plug-ins that simulate 3D effects in *Photoshop*. Most plug-ins can be installed into *Photoshop's* plug-ins folder then accessed through the Filter menu. There are some quite sophisticated plug-ins that simulate a 3D software application – some can even apply texture maps and decals to the 3D objects. ca-p

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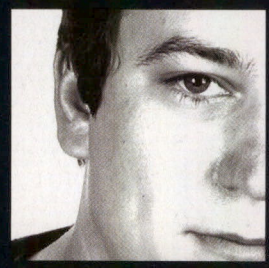

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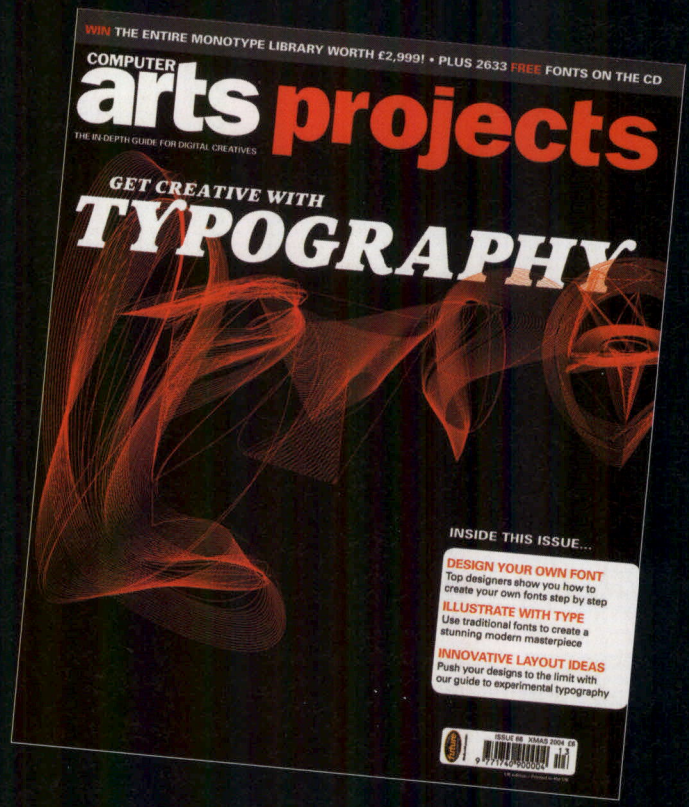
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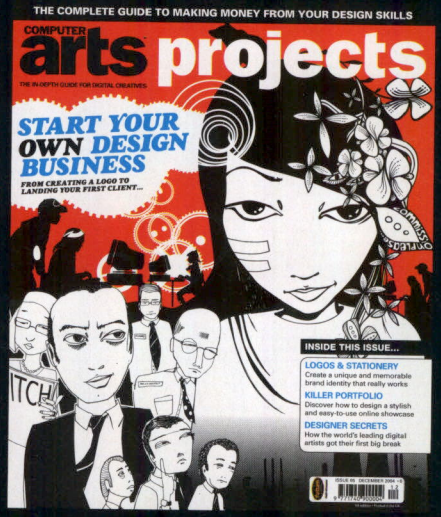
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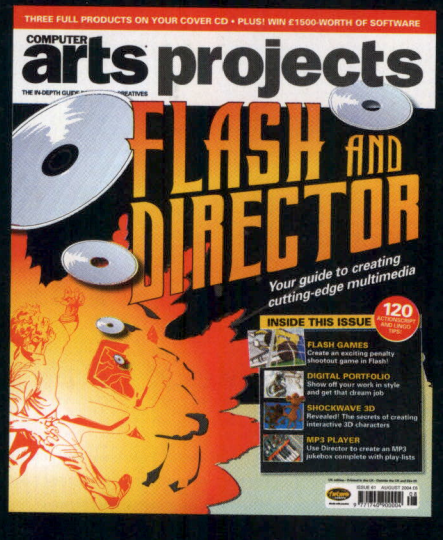
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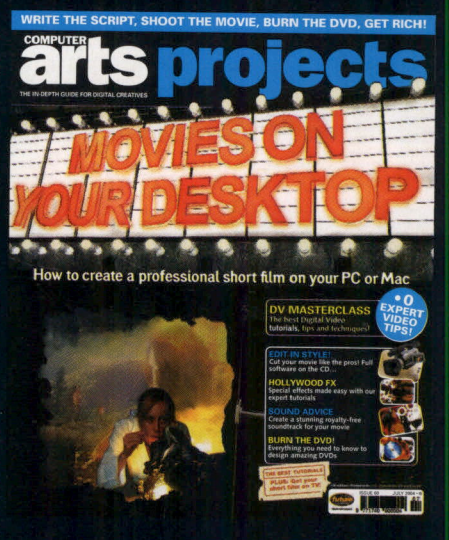
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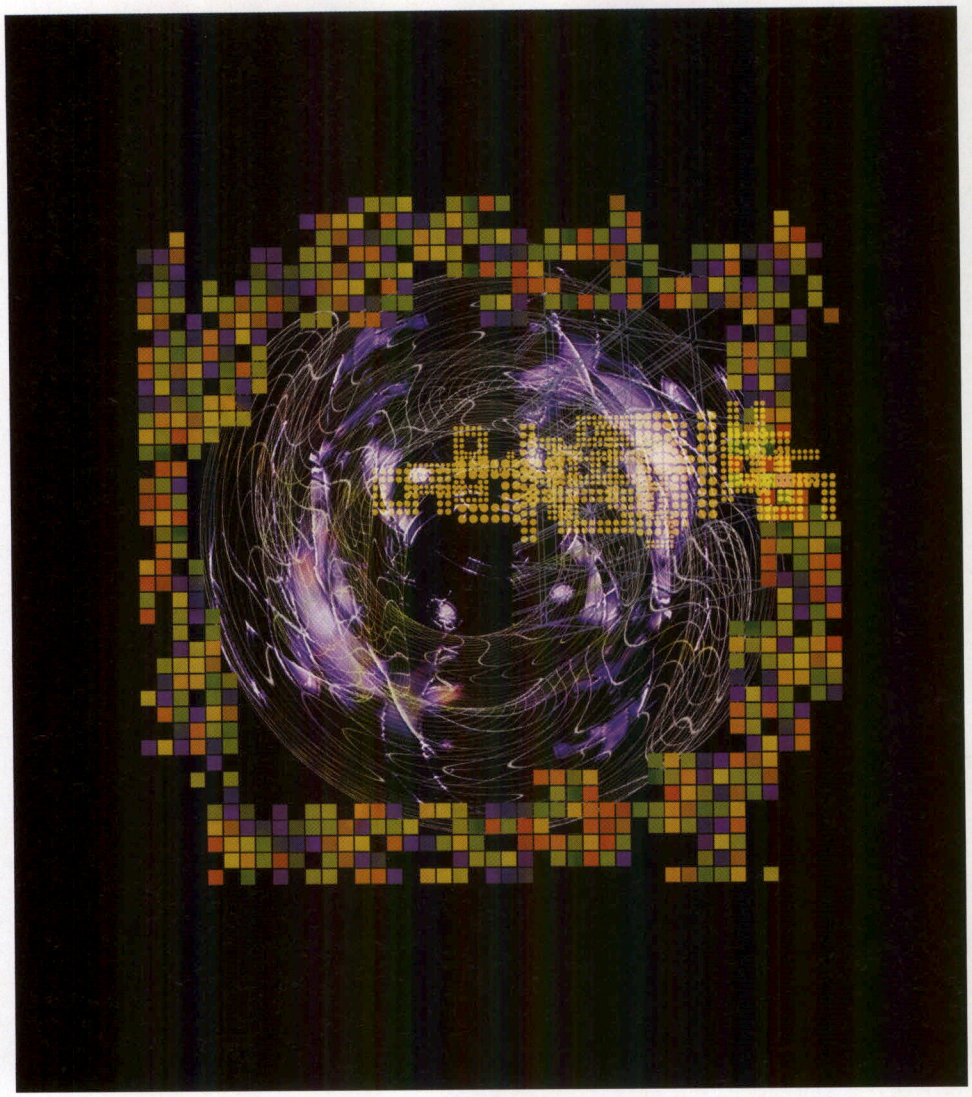
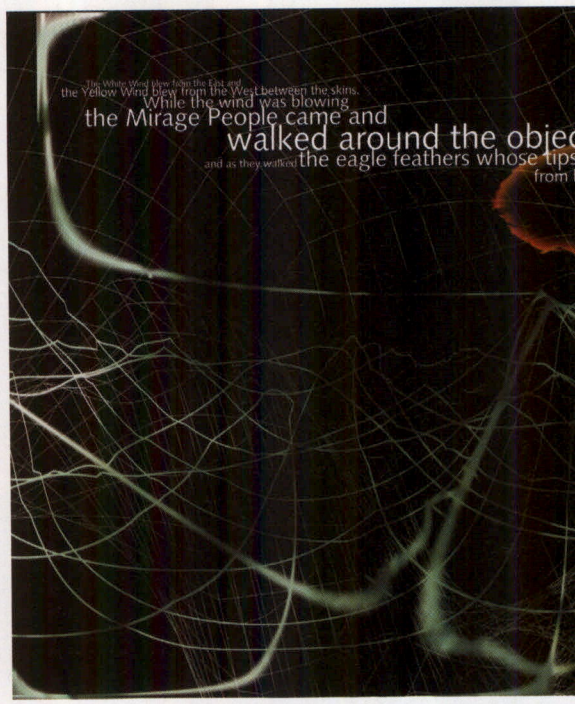
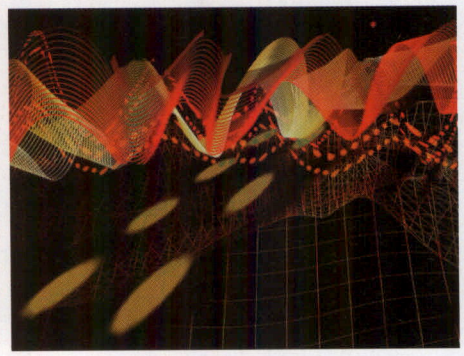



the Yellow Wind blew from the West between the skins.
While the wind was blowing
the Mirage People came and
walked around the obje
and as they walked the eagle feathers whose tips



Profile: Fusako Akimoto

"My work is about time and space, it's what I'm interested in most." Fusako Akimoto puts things in perspective.

If you've been grappling with the big issues of science lately, the chances are your reading material was accompanied by a Fusako Akimoto illustration. Fusako produces images with a strong sense of the abstract, a handy trait when your work involves "abstract stories about the universe."

Just an illusion

Fusako discovered illustration while studying in Tokyo: "I took an illustration module as part of my graphic design course and the tutor introduced me to pop art." That did the trick.

Thanks to the likes of David Hockney, before long illustration had taken over as her primary creative outlet, so she decided that was what she wanted to do: "I came to London and took an MA in illustration at the Royal College."

While studying at the Royal College, Fusako began to develop her style around a seemingly simple obsession with ideas of space and time: "I developed a technique using acetate," she says. "I would take photos or found images and colour copy them onto acetate, then make collages."

The final pieces developed Fusako's interest in depth and perception. "The effect was unpredictable and I liked that." The unpredictable nature of the work continued when Fusako began to work with projected images. "Unfortunately, acetate is expensive, so I was forced to look for other ways of working."

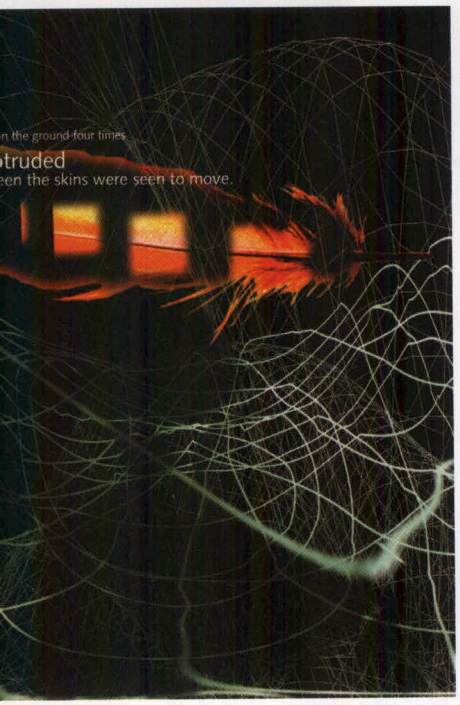
Having tried using overlaid slides to achieve similar results, Fusako moved into a higher gear. She explains: "I did installations which involved projecting images through gauze." Again, the results of her projects were unpredictable: "It had the effect of disorienting your sense of depth," she says. And again they took on our understanding of space and reality.

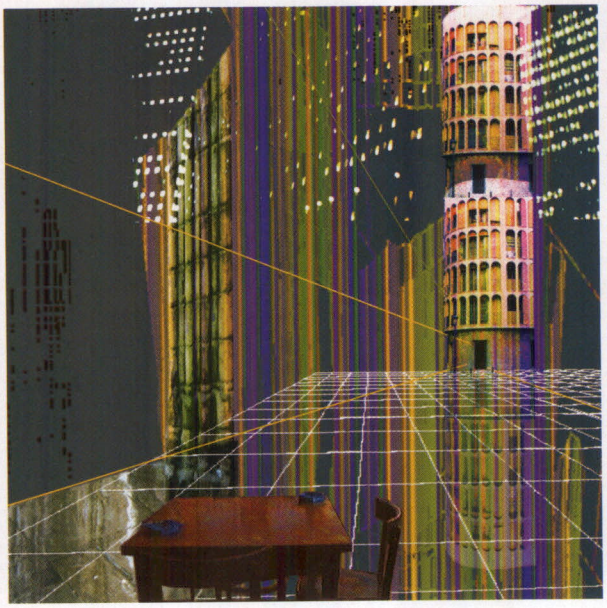
Other worlds

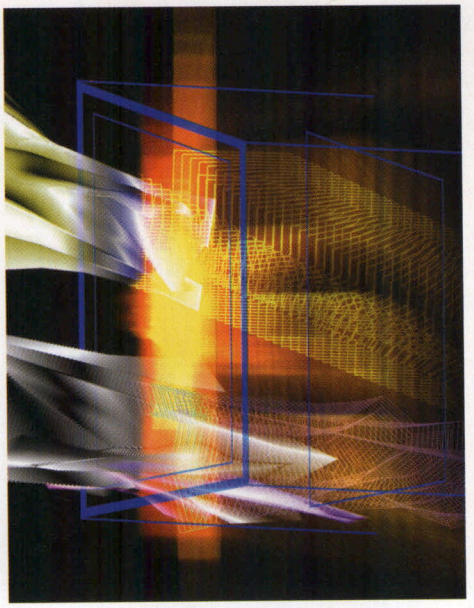
"My favourite jobs have been for *New Scientist*. They always have interesting articles," says Fusako. Oddly enough, "The ones they'd get me involved with were the fairly abstract stories about the universe." It looks like that research might just pay off.

When the story involves the space–time continuum, Fusako is ready with the visuals: "The concept of how to understand other worlds is difficult to illustrate, but I seem well suited to that type of subject." Fusako is being modest here because her work doesn't just answer the brief, it feels like you're actually thinking about the subject at hand.

"It comes down to depth and space again," she says. "They give me quite simple explanations of the







Above from left to right:
The author Gabriel Garcia Marquez is an influence for Fusako: "The time in his books is very non-linear, I find that sort of thing fascinating," she says.

Combining 3D elements using *Photoshop's* layers, Fusako generates the illusion of space which her work is so often about.

While studying graphic design in Tokyo, Fusako became interested in pop art, the influence of artists such as David Hockney can still be detected in her work.

Currently doubling as a graphic designer for an international brand consultancy, Fusako says this role is more rational, "The interesting thing is that you handle the project from start to finish."

Left: The neon depths which characterise Fusako's work are in part the result of experiments with acetate conducted while studying illustration at the Royal College.

story and a few elements – I just expand on things from there." Fusako takes the ideas for a walk and just lets nature take its course.

"I graduated in 1993 and back then computers were just so unsophisticated and slow," says Fusako. Coming from a traditional background, her work had remained strongly analog: "I had only touched on *Photoshop* when I left the Royal College. Even now I wouldn't say I'm good technically," she says.

Fusako had been exploring techniques mirrored in *Photoshop's* architecture while studying for her MA: "*Photoshop* can be similar to layering acetate," she explains. "I don't try to emulate that, but I always use lots of layers to get the kind of depth I'm looking for."

The conversion to digital has been all but completed: "I don't sketch or anything, I usually go straight to the computer now." But the accidental is still important to Fusako: "I love it even when the program crashes and you get the strangest stuff happening." This approach is extended to things such as filters, using them as on-demand accidents.

General theory

Fusako sees a clear trade-off in popularity between photography and illustration. "When I was at college, photography was much cooler," she says. This could be deduced from the fact that: "It was what all the tutors would be talking about."

But the pendulum has swung back the other way: "Illustration is definitely stronger now." It seems that illustration is coming of age, no longer dominated by the computer. "It's interesting because it's not totally digital," says Fusako. "There are hand-drawn elements creeping in, it's much more human."

Fusako leads a bit of a double life, holding down a day job as a graphic designer for an international branding consultant, something she says is "much more rational."

The rationality stems from the scope of the role: "The interesting thing," says Fusako, "is that you handle the project from start to finish. You take a much broader view." The illustrator is often peripheral to a job: "You only get involved in one section of a project." So working as a designer gives Fusako a chance to see the other side of the fence.

Interestingly, this role involves commissioning illustrators, something Fusako enjoys: "It's fun to see them pushing the brief to see how far they can take things." It also gives her some sympathy for those who've commissioned her in the past. ca-p

Fusako Akimoto can be contacted through Debut Art at **[w]** www.debutart.com.

Illustration: Adi Gilbert at 99SECONDS [w] www.99seconds.com

Distort with style

Distortion doesn't have to mean destruction. The secret of the Distort filters is using them in ways other than they were intended...

Anyone can apply a filter to an image, but the real beauty of using filters is when the effects are subtle and almost go unnoticed. Of course, it's not easy to achieve this, especially when you're talking about the Distort filters in *Photoshop*. This set of filters is probably the least used because its effects tend to be limiting and often not very desirable. But with a little exploration, you may find that even this sorry set of filters can hold the key to a creative solution.

Probably the best filter of the set is the Displace filter, enabling you to use one image as a displacement map to distort the pixels of another. You can get some very unusual results with this filter, but here we're going to concentrate on blending and gently warping two images together and creating a carved text effect. Another text effect is created using the Glass filter, which will produce an enlarged halftone dot effect when applied with the right settings.

Subtle distortions can make an image a bit more dynamic, such as using the Shear filter to change the perspective, or using the Pinch filter to beef up muscle tone or to shrink or enlarge features of the body. We'll also show you how the Wave and Spherise filters can be used to create a quick design idea that would otherwise have taken hours using a more conventional technique.

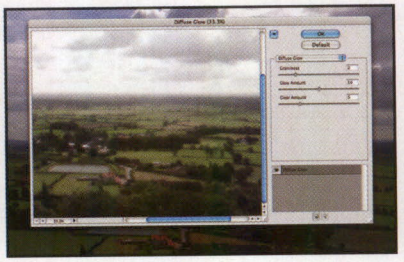
Expertise provided by Frank Bartucca. Frank can be contacted at **[e]** frankdesign@btinternet.com.

All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be found on this month's cover CD in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Distort folder.

Part 1: Diffuse Glow effect

When used correctly, this filter can improve the quality and colour of an average looking photo...

1 The Diffuse Glow filter doesn't actually distort pixels, but adds a glowing effect in the highlights of an image by using the background colour. It does have limited use, but one thing it's really good at is creating an atmosphere on photos. Open the Landscape.tif file from the CD and duplicate the background layer.



2 With this image, the intent is to add colour depth to the land while leaving the sky as it is. Go to Filter>Distort>Diffuse Glow and set the Graininess to 2, Glow Amount to 10 and Clear Amount to 5. As you can see, the whole image is lightened with a glowing effect that softens the edge detail.

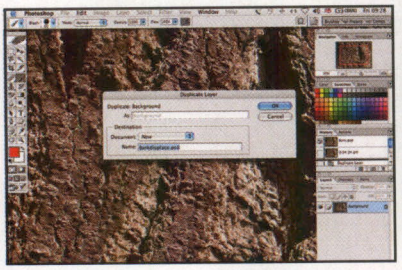
3 Add a layer mask to the duplicate layer and use the Gradient tool to draw a linear black-to-white gradient from the middle of the sky vertically down to the middle of the land. Now you need to set the layer to Soft Light to lift the overall colour in the foreground and add extra depth to the trees in particular.

Part 2: Displacement blending

The Displace filter is used here to gently distort and blend two images together...

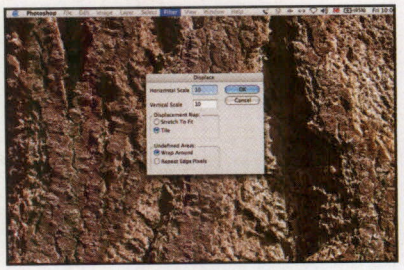
Displacement maps

A displacement map is basically any file that has been saved in a flattened *Photoshop* file format. It's best to convert the file to greyscale because you get a better idea of how the light and dark areas in the map will distort an image. Dark areas will distort the image downwards and light areas upwards. The values you choose for the Horizontal and Vertical Scale options dictate the amount and direction of the distortion; negative values will distort the image in the opposite direction. The other options handle how the effect is fitted to the image if the displacement map is a different size to the image.

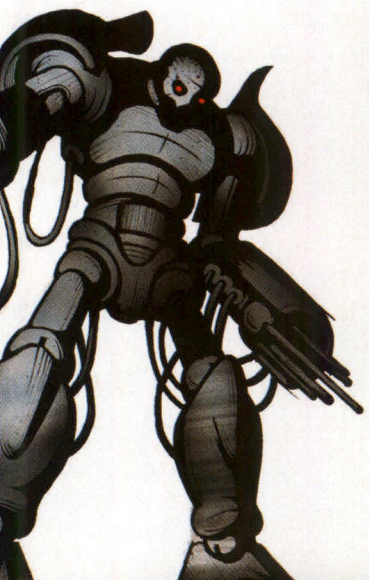


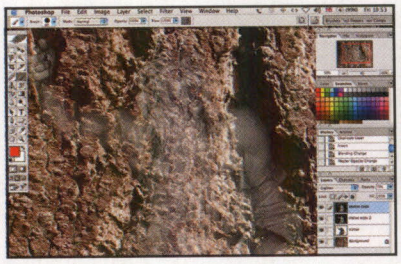
1 Open the Bark.psd file from the cover CD. To make a displacement map from this image, Right/Ctrl-click next to the layer thumbnail and choose Duplicate Layer from the pop-up menu. In the Duplicate Layer dialog box, choose New for destination and name it Barkdisplace.psd. The duplicate image is then opened in a new window.

2 Convert the new file to greyscale and run the Gaussian Blur filter at 4 pixels to soften the image and reduce the edge detail. Use the Auto Levels command to adjust the contrast slightly, save the file as a *Photoshop* file and close it. Open the Statue.psd file from the CD. Re-apply the Gaussian Blur filter and Auto Levels command, save as Statuedisplace.psd and close the file.

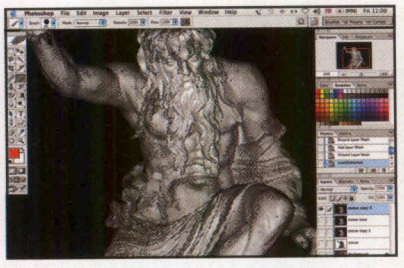


3 Now that we have our two displacement maps we're ready to apply the first to the Bark.psd file. Go to Filter>Distort>Displace and type 10 in the Horizontal and Vertical Scale text boxes. Click OK and locate the Statuedisplace.psd file for a subtle distortion effect. Open the original Statue.psd file and duplicate the layer into the Bark.psd file.





4 Duplicate the layer and hide it, invert the Statue layer and run the Displace filter using the same settings, but choosing the Barkdisplace.psd file as the displacement map. Set the layer to Soft Light, duplicate it, invert it and set the layer to Overlay at 50 per cent Opacity. Select the Statue copy layer and set it to Lighten at 70 per cent Opacity.



5 Duplicate this layer and make it the active layer, then turn off all the other layers. Set the layer to Normal at 100 per cent Opacity. Click on the Channels tab and make a selection from the RGB composite channel. In the Layers palette, click on the 'Add layer mask' button then invert the layer so that the mask hides all the lighter areas of the statue.

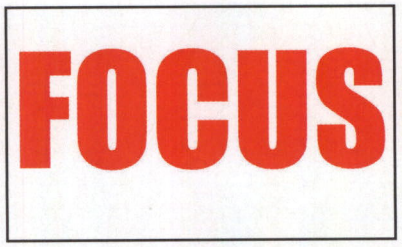
6 For a more natural-looking effect, set this layer to Colour, at 50 per cent Opacity, to blend the areas of bark that overlap the statue. Click on the 'Add a layer style' button and choose Drop Shadow. Set the Opacity to 100 per cent, Distance to 40, Size to 10 and leave all the other settings as default. This final adjustment helps to create a bit more depth to the statue.

Part 3: Glass text effects

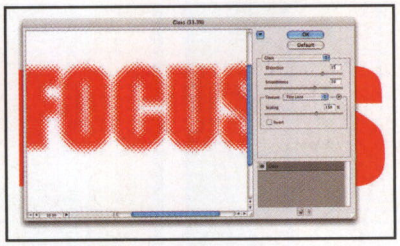
The Glass filter can have some surprising results when applied to text...

Wide angle pinch

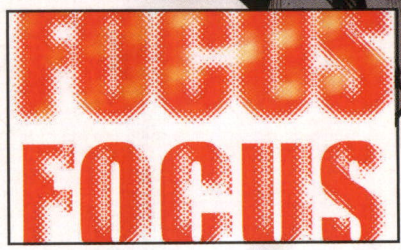
One of the most subtle distortions you can perform on an image is to pinch it slightly to simulate the effect of a wide-angle lens. Open your image and go to Filter>Distort>Pinch. In the dialog box, set the Amount to 28 per cent to draw the image in towards the centre. Use the Crop tool to delete the top and bottom forming a letterbox shape. Try this technique on the Landscape image on your cover CD.



1 The Glass filter can be used to add an edge effect to text. Here the word FOCUS is written in the Impact font, then merged with an underlying layer filled with white. You need to do this otherwise the effect will be confined to the interior of the text and will not be extended beyond the edges.



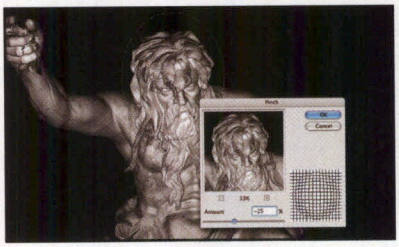
2 In the Glass filter dialog box, the Distortion option is set to 15 and the Smoothness to 10. The Tiny Lens Texture is chosen because it produces a kind of halftone print effect and is set to 150 per cent with the Scaling slider. The Blocks texture also gives an interesting result when the Scaling is set to 50 per cent.



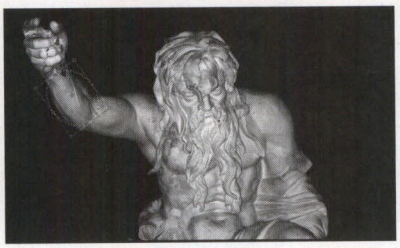
3 An image of a blurred lampshade is brought in under the text layer and the text layer is set to Lighten to complete this effect. The other text effect seen at the bottom is achieved by offsetting the filtered text layer with the original text layer, again set on the Lighten blending mode.

Part 4: Subtle exaggeration

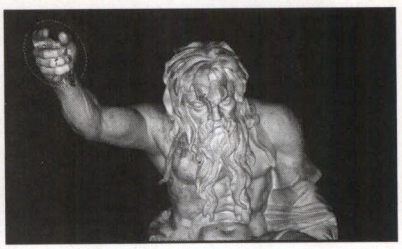
The Pinch filter is used here to manipulate selected areas of the image...



1 Open the Statue.psd file from the CD. Pick up the Elliptical Marquee tool and make a selection around the statue's head. Feather the selection by 10 pixels and go to Filter>Distort> Pinch. Set the Amount to -25 per cent to make the head appear a little bigger than it really is.



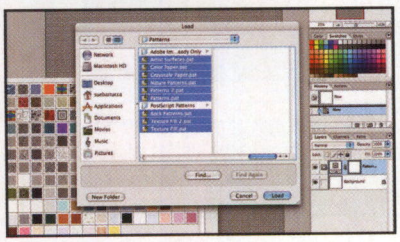
2 Draw an ellipse over the biceps of the right arm and feather the selection by 10. In the Pinch dialog, set the Amount to -35 per cent to increase the size of the muscle. Go to Select> Transform Selection and move the selection to the forearm, rotate and adjust it to fit over the forearm area.



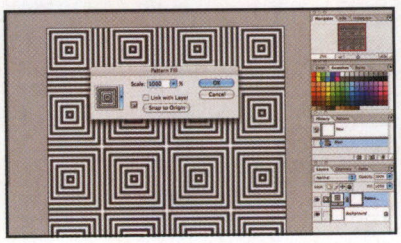
3 Apply the Pinch filter again with the same setting, Ctrl/Cmnd+F. Then move the selection over to the hand and use the Transform Selection command to adjust the shape until it fits neatly. Then apply the Pinch filter at +15 per cent to shrink the hand, creating a subtle but exaggerated image.

Part 5: Geometric patterns

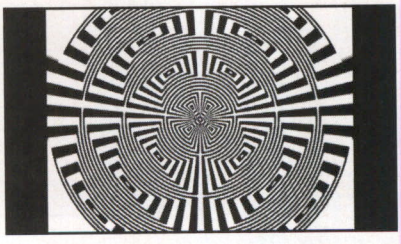
When applied to a pattern, the Polar Coordinates filter warps it into a circular grid...



1 Open a new square-shaped document, 200x200mm at 300dpi. Create a new fill or adjustment layer and select Pattern. In the Pattern Fill dialog box, click on the blue bar to open the Pattern Picker, then on the arrow in the corner and select Load Patterns from the pop-up menu.

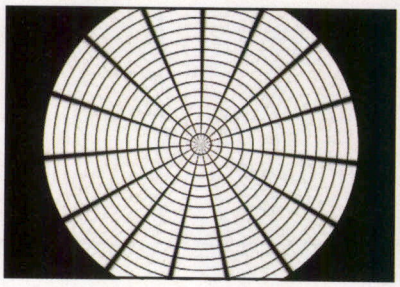


2 You should be taken to the Photoshop CS> Presets>Patterns folder. Select all the patterns to load them into the Pattern Picker. Choose the Optical Squares pattern and set the Scale to 1000 per cent. Deselect the 'Link with Layer' option, drag on the canvas area to centralise the pattern and click OK.

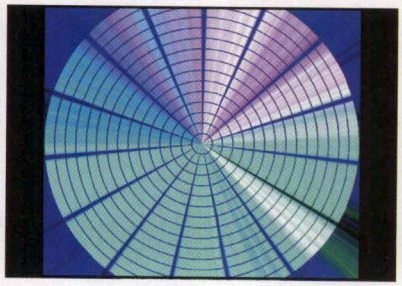


3 Right/Ctrl-click next to the layer thumbnail and choose Rasterise Layer. Go to Filter>Distort> Polar Coordinates and pick the 'Rectangular to Polar' option. Duplicate the layer and set it to Hard Light, then add a Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer and set the Brightness to -80 and Contrast to +80.

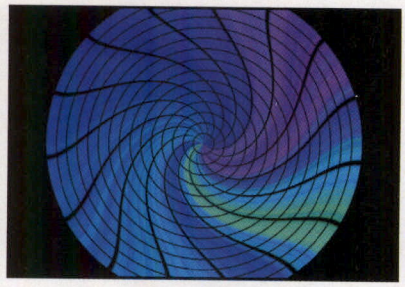
Geometric patterns continued...



4 To create this pattern effect, choose the Tiles Smooth pattern from the Pattern Picker. Set the scale to 492 per cent to fit snugly onto the canvas. Again rasterise the layer and apply the 'Rectangular to Polar' option from the Polar Coordinates dialog box. Duplicate the layer and set it to Colour Burn to bump up the contrast.



5 On a layer beneath the two pattern layers, pick up the Gradient tool with the Blues gradient selected (you may need to load this) and draw a linear gradient across the canvas. In the Polar Coordinates dialog, apply the 'Rectangular to Polar' option over the gradient, then set the pattern layer above to Overlay to blend in the three layers.



6 Now put a slight spin on the effect. Link the two pattern layers and merge them into a single layer. Apply the Twirl filter with the Angle option set to about 130 degrees to both the pattern and gradient layers. Set the pattern layer to Multiply, this time to keep the pattern effect black.

Part 6: Wave designs

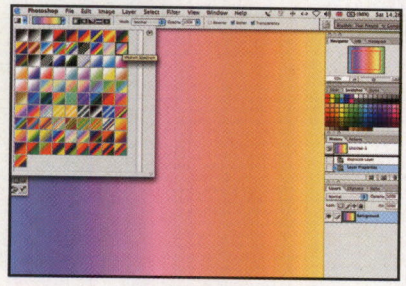
Use two simple effects and the Wave filter to get stuck into some serious design...

Designing with filters

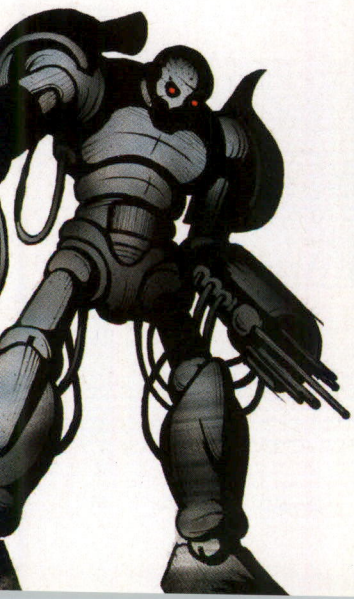
The Wave and Spherise filters aren't two effects a designer would usually consider when trying to produce a piece of creative artwork. But, as you can see from this tutorial, this piece of design is produced easily when the right combination of option settings are used. Trying to achieve this kind of effect would take ages using a conventional method such as building up gradient layers with layer masks. Using the Wave filter to break up the text also makes sure the pieces are placed to correspond with the pattern.

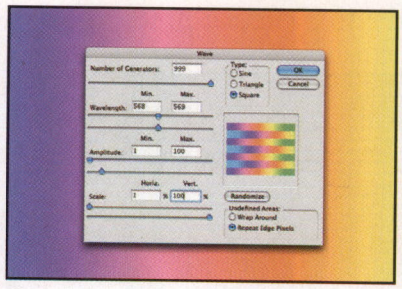
1 Open the 'Rocks and sea.tif' file from the CD and go to Filter>Distort>Wave. To create the above pattern, set the Number of Generators to 57, Wavelength Min. to 998, Wavelength Max. to 999, Amplitude Min. to 1, Amplitude Max. to 408, Scale Horiz. to 100 per cent, Scale Vert. to 1 per cent, select Square and choose Repeat Edge Pixels.

2 To create an effect that breaks up an image into rectangles and rearranges the pieces in a random order, set the Number of Generators to 200, Wavelength Min. to 998, Wavelength Max. to 999, Amplitude Min. to 1, Amplitude Max. to 500, Scale Horiz. to 1 per cent, Scale Vert. to 100 per cent, select Square and choose Wrap Around.

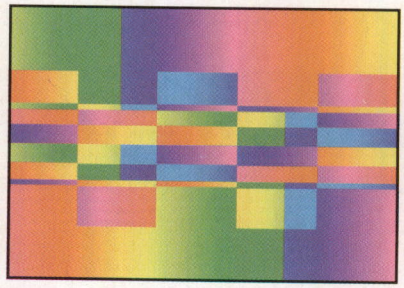


3 Now we'll use the Wave filter as part of a creative process to create a colourful typographic design. Open a new document of 210x160mm at 300dpi. Pick up the Gradient tool and choose the Medium Spectrum gradient from the Gradient Picker and select Linear in the Options bar. Draw a horizontal gradient across the canvas.





4 To break up the gradient into a pattern, go to Filter>Distort>Wave and add the following in the dialog box. Set the Number of Generators to 999, Wavelength Min. to 568, Wavelength Max. to 569, Amplitude Min. to 1, Amplitude Max. to 100, Scale Horiz. to 1 per cent, Scale Vert. to 100 per cent, select Square and choose Repeat Edge Pixels.

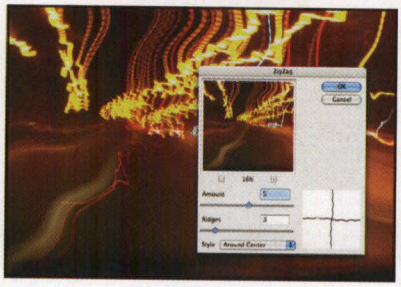


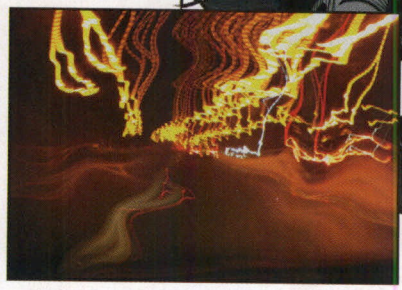
5 To distort the gradient in the other direction set the Wavelength Min. to 998, Wavelength Max. to 999, Amplitude Max. to 40, Scale Horiz. to 100 per cent, Scale Vert. to 1 per cent, and select Wrap Around. To squeeze the pattern into more of a horizontal line, apply the Spherise filter at -100 on Vertical Only mode.

6 Apply the filter again to increase the effect. Add a Text layer and type the word COLOUR in Big Caslon at 230pt. Duplicate the text layer, rasterise it, then re-apply the Wave filter. Set this layer to Overlay, then invert the text layer. Duplicate the gradient pattern layer and set it to Colour Burn to intensify the colours throughout the design.

Part 7: Mild distortions

The Shear and Zig Zag filters put a different slant and a subtle spin on these images...





1 Open the Skateboarder.tif from the CD. To give more of a dynamic feel to the image you can apply a subtle Shear effect. Go to Filter>Distort> Shear and pull the top anchor point over a little to the right of the centre, then pull the bottom anchor point a bit to the left. The image will need cropping to discard the overlapped areas on each side.

2 The trails of light in this shot are first given a slightly more wavy distortion using the Zig Zag filter. This filter usually creates spinning or rippling effects, but when it's used on very low settings the effect is subtle. Here the Amount is set to 5, Ridges to 3 and the Style to Around Centre.

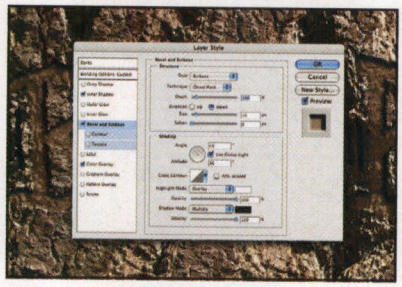
3 To create a stronger distortion around the edges of the image, the Zig Zag filter was applied again on a feathered selection leaving the centre untouched on a duplicate layer. The layer is then blended into the background layer using Lighten to add the extra streaks of light to the image without affecting the colour.

Part 8: Carved text effects

Use the Displace filter and layer styles to create this carved effect...

Getting it right

The technique shown here can take a bit of fiddling in the Layer Styles dialog box to get the effect just right and looking natural. One of the most important things is to match the lighting on the effect with the lighting in the image. The depth of the shadows also needs to match those on the image, and, of course, the blending of the effect needs to be right. But these three steps will give you a basic understanding and starting point from which to expand.



1 Open the Bark.psd file from the CD. Add a text layer and type the word BARK in the Tremor font at 500pt. Rasterise the text layer, then go to Filter> Distort>Displace and type in 10 for the Horizontal and Vertical Scale options. Use the Barkdisplace.psd file we created earlier as the displacement map for the text.

2 For the carved effect, add a Bevel and Emboss layer style. Use these settings – Style: Emboss, Technique: Chisel Hard, Depth: 100, Direction: Down, Size: 10, Soften: 0, Angle: 45 degrees, Altitude: 20, Gloss Contour: Linear, Highlight Mode: Overlay, Opacity: 100, Shadow Mode: Multiply, Opacity: 100.

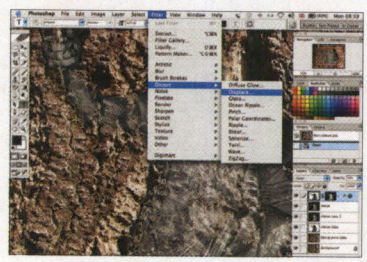
3 Select Inner Shadow and set Blend Mode: Multiply, Opacity: 100, Use Global Light, Distance: 10, Choke: 20, Size: 25. Select Colour Overlay. Set the colour to C:48, M:62, Y:68, K:15. In Blending Options select the 'Blend Interior Effects as Group' option, and set the layer to Soft Light.

Explore and experiment

Discover the creative power that lies beneath even the most boring of filters...

We hope this tutorial has inspired you to experiment more with this set of filters. The Distort sub-menu is one of the worst *Photoshop* has to offer in its set of filters, but if you only have access to *Photoshop's* built-in filters, it's up to you to discover what you can achieve with them. The Displace filter in particular can produce some truly unique text effects when used with a photo that you've taken yourself as the displacement map.

Don't believe the designers and illustrators who tell you to keep away from filters, because they're there to be explored. As you've seen in this tutorial, when used with a specific effect in mind and blended and used with other techniques, you can produce some good results. And once you do start to experiment with *Photoshop's* filters you'll realise that although they seem limiting to begin with, the effects you can produce are only limited by your imagination. We admit that we did miss out a couple of filters from the Distort sub-menu, but that was because there isn't much else you can do with them other than use them for their intended effect. CAP



The Distort filters are not the best in *Photoshop*, but they can still produce some amazing effects.

SCREEN.GRAB.
VIDEO.STILL.
IMPORT.GRAB.
EFFECT.AND.
FILTER.
SCREEN.GR
VIDEO.STIL
DIGITISE.72DPI.
DV.FOOTAGE.
SHOOT.72DPI.
DV.FOOTAGE
DIGITAL.IMAGE.UNDER.CONSTRU
72DPI.720X576.PX>300DPI.VARIA
CIAO!ROBIN!
HEE.HEEEEE!
TORINO.ITALIA.

DV stills for print

With the right effects and techniques, you can take frames from digital video footage and turn them into clear stills for printing DVD covers, posters or promo images...

Digital video footage can look great when printed out, but it always needs some careful tweaking first. The DV image is captured as interlaced lines, rather than as a complete picture. This looks fine when the image is changing on screen 25 times a second, but when frozen, the quality looks sub-standard. With care, you can take a frame, process it in *Photoshop*, and make it look like a production still taken with a 35mm film camera.

DV footage is relatively low resolution compared to still cameras, so the smaller you print your image the better it will look. If your footage is well-lit, you stand a good chance of getting a shot that will look good, even when blown up.

Production stills are usually shot on set, with a still film camera, while the actors run through a scene before the actual take. Unfortunately, most production stills look disappointing because the actors aren't really acting. This is a good reason to take stills from your actual footage; it will always look like a real moment from your film. DV stills costs nothing to produce, and you always have more choice than you ever would if you shot stills separately.

Expertise provided by Chris Kenworthy, a film director and part-time actor living in Australia. Visit **[w]** www.thedreamsequence.com or contact **[e]** thoughtfox@mac.com.

All the DV footage used in this tutorial can be found on this month's cover CD in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\DV footage folder. You'll also find four images showing the end results.

Part 1: Shot choice

Choosing the correct frame is more important than anything you actually do to the image...

Good light, good results

Poorly lit DV footage will yield poor results, no matter what you attempt in *Photoshop*. If, however, you have a well-lit subject against a dark background, you can achieve good results. Select the dark area, using the Wand or Lasso, and apply the Despeckle filter to smooth out pixels.

1 Watch through the clips Summer.mov, Corridor.mov, Run.mov and Night.mov on the cover CD, and see which frame you might choose from each. In Summer.mov, one of the first frames is probably the best, because the hand movement later in the clip (see above) is a distraction.

2 In Night.mov, there are problems throughout the shot that aren't present when the clip is seen as a moving image. The actor moves out of frame for a moment, and at other times the moving shadows on her face and hair look too harsh.

3 In Corridor.mov, most frames are unusable because of the excessive motion blurring. When the actor is close to the camera , the short lens distorts the face. This is the desired effect in the moving footage, but it's too extreme for a still.

4 In shots with lots of movement, you'll struggle to find useable frames. Here, the foreground is in focus, but the running actors are blurred. This doesn't capture the sense of movement; instead, it makes them look like they're out of focus.

5 Movement can look good, but you should find a frame that conveys the movement around the subject. In this frame, the actors are frozen clearly, while the trees around them are blurred, which is the look you want.

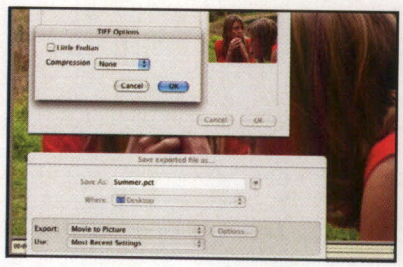
6 Be wary of choosing a shot where the person's expression is wrong, even if the shot works in every other way. Whether you're shooting actors or people in the real world, a face changing from one expression to another usually looks bizarre as a still.

Part 2: Smoothing out

Choose the correct export settings, bring your still into *Photoshop* and perform a basic correction...

Think ahead

As you work, bear in mind how the end result is going to be used. Will there be text placed over the image? If so, you can darken and blur an area ready for the text. If you're printing standalone production stills, this isn't so much of an issue, but when the image will be incorporated into a design, work with the designer as closely as possible.



1 You should export the still without any compression. Although DV is a compressed format, you don't want to add any other artifacts. In QuickTime, Export as 'Movie to Picture', and in the Options choose Tiff set to 'Millions of Colours+', with Compression set to None.

2 Launch *Photoshop* and open the image. You'll notice that some edges show severe interlacing, where the television lines leave 'jaggies'. There are usually worst where there is high contrast or movement. Take note of the worst areas, so you can monitor them as you adjust the image.

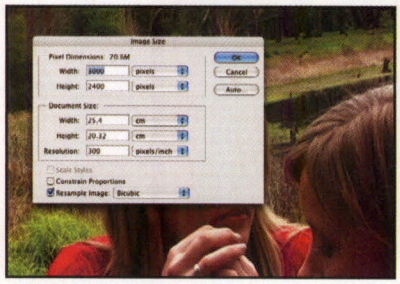
3 Apply Filters>Video>De-Interlace, set to Even Fields and Interpolation. If the result doesn't look as good as you hoped, you can try changing the setting to Duplication. The image doesn't need to be perfect, because you'll make more adjustments, but the De-interlace filter should take away all the jagged edges.

Part 3: Compare and contrast

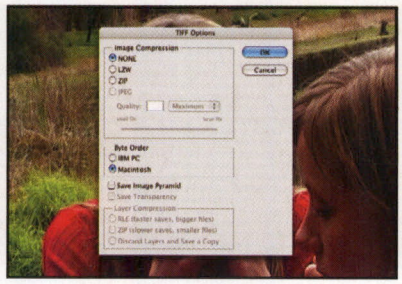
As you work, you'll need to see how your changes will look when printed out, with a 'soft proof'..

Make subjects stand out

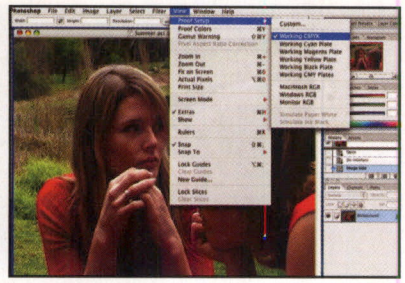
Although DV cameras now create excellent footage, there's still a problem with subjects appearing to blend into the background. This is because the subject, or actor, often looks as bright and sharp as the background. As you work, you should always aim to make the subject stand out from the background.



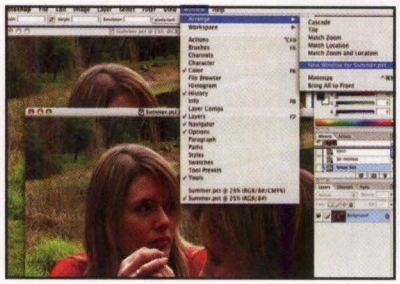
1 For the purpose of printing, the resolution of an image should be set to 300 pixels per inch. Although larger files can be slower to work with, you should change the image size first, for more accuracy and control of detail. Go to Image>Image Size and check the Resample Image box, set to Bicubic.



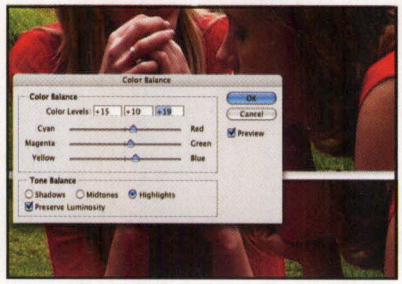
2 At this point you should save a copy of the image as a template. That way, if you make mistakes, you can use this template image to start again (without performing the initial time-consuming tasks all over again). You should save the image as a TIFF, without compression.



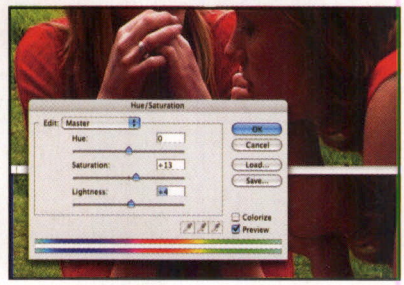
3 DV footage will automatically be in RGB mode, but when you've finished, you'll need to change to CMYK Mode for printing. As the modes are slightly different, it helps to see a 'soft proof' of the CMYK print look as you work. Go to View>Proof Setup and check Working CMYK.



4 Go to Window>Arrange, and choose New Window. A second version of the image will appear. Choose View>Proof Colours, and this image will act as a CYMK preview. Be sure to perform changes to the RGB window (this is indicated in the bar at the top of the window).



5 Apply Image>Adjustments>Colour Balance, with the Preserve Luminosity box checked. And make adjustments to the colours. You can try to recreate the look that your DV footage has on TV, or simply make it look brighter. It's usually a good idea to ensure that skin tones look natural.



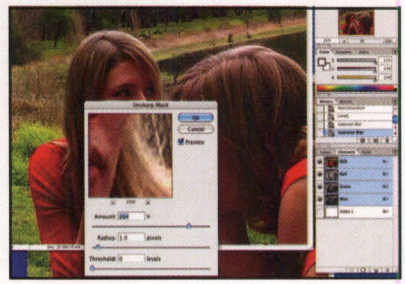
6 Go to Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation, and bump up the Saturation. Only perform this step if the DV image lost some of its impact when opened in *Photoshop*. Over-saturating makes for a poor print job, so use this sparingly, and check your CMYK preview to get an idea of the end result.

Part 4: Image enhancement

Subtle blurs, brightness changes and filters help to smoothe out unwanted jagged edges...

1 Go to Image>Adjustments>Levels. You can do plenty of work here to affect contrast, but a good approach with DV is to click Options, set Algorithm to Enhance Monochromatic Contrast, click OK, then click Auto.

2 Click on the Channels tab and select the Blue layer, which is usually the most pixelated of all video channels. Apply a Gaussian Blur set to 2.0 pixels, and then go back to RGB Channels. The image should not lose clarity, but will be less pixelated.



3 Apply the Unsharp Mask filter, and set the Amount to about 200 per cent, with Radius set to 1.0. The effect of this filter is quite subtle, and shouldn't soften the image too much. Check the result against your template image to make sure clarity is being maintained.

Part 5: Depth of field

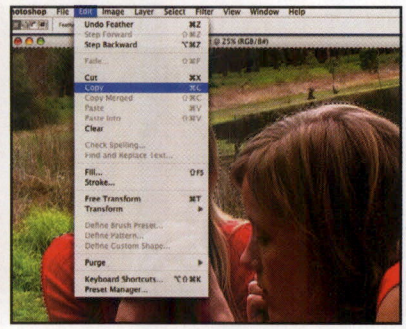
To simulate the characteristics of a film camera, the background and foreground need blurring...

Adding style

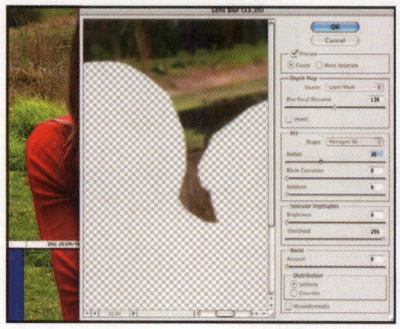
Super-stylised images are an option if all else fails. If your footage is so dark, or fast-moving, that clear production stills are impossible to create, you can apply filters such as Cutout, to create an 'impression' of the image rather than a photographic look.

1 Use the Lasso tool to draw around the background, by Opt-clicking (Mac) or Alt-clicking (Windows). Be certain to select all areas of visible background, such as the grass at the bottom right, between the women's arms. This selection will be feathered, so it doesn't need to be perfect.

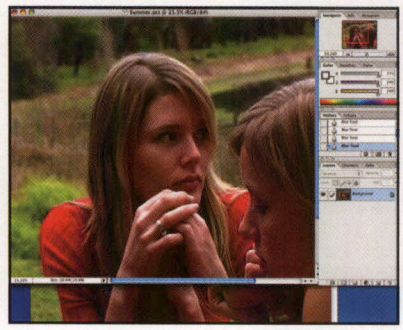
2 Go to Select>Feather, and set the Feather Radius to about 6 pixels and click OK. The more feathering, the softer the transition will be from blurred background to sharp foreground. In real photographs, these borders are quite sharp, but a feather of about 6 pixels looks realistic enough.



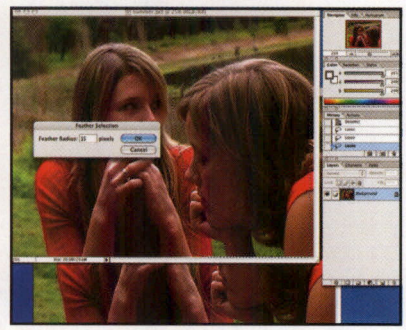
3 Go to Edit>Copy, and then Edit>Paste, to copy the background over the image. You can check the accuracy of your lasso work by switching off the eye icon next to the background layer, to switch off its visibility.



4 Apply the Lens Blur filter to the image of the far background. This filter gives a blur that resembles the depth-of-field blurring created by a 35mm lens. The Radius slider gives you instant control over the amount of blur. Personal taste is more important here than realistic blurring.



5 Go to Layer>Flatten Image, and use the Blur tool to soften the edge between the foreground and background. Use a small brush, set to a blur level of 100 per cent. When you're done, the background should look blurred, and the foreground sharply in focus, without a jagged edge between them.



6 A 35mm lens would also blur objects or people that are closer to the camera, so use the Lasso to approximately select the foreground actor. This can be a loose selection, and should be feathered by about 15 pixels.

7 Apply a Gaussian Blur filter to this foreground section, set to about 8 pixels. The foreground shouldn't be blurred out of view, but the detail should be reduced, so that the viewer's eye is drawn to the central subject of the image.

8 You can also darken the foreground. Although unrealistic, this enhances the composition, and makes sure the subject is striking. Use the Burn tool, with a large brush, to darken the blurred foreground. The combination of bright background and dark foreground keeps the main actor clear.

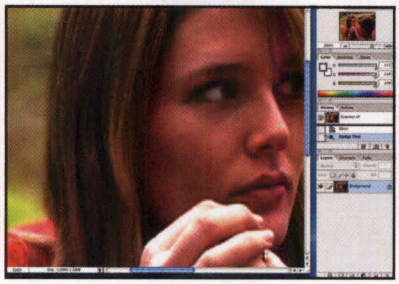
9 Check over your image to see if any other corrections are needed. In the Night.mov close-up, the light shines on the actor's lips. Although this looks fine in a moving image, the sparkle is a bit much for a still. Use the Clone tool to paint out such sparkles.

Part 6: Light correction

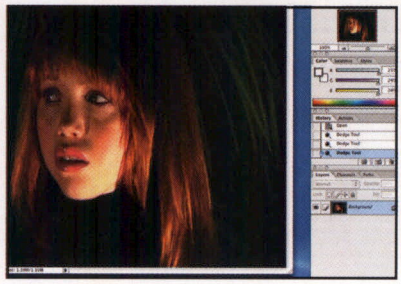
Get shots ready for print by brightening eyes, lightening backgrounds, and dropping the colour...

Find the right footage

Don't forget to check through your DV tapes for good shots. You may find the perfect frame in a shot that never made it through to the final edit. These DV tapes are particularly useful for culling making-of shots, or images of the cast and crew in off-duty moments.



1 If your footage is of people, you may find that the eyes look quite dark, due to the way DV footage processes the image. Use the Dodge tool to whiten the eyes. Don't overdo the effect, or the eyes will appear to glow.

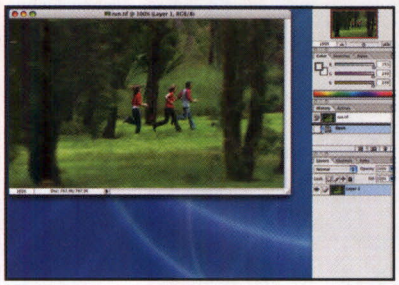


2 Night-time shots, such as Night.mov, suffer when transferred to *Photoshop*, losing colour and brightness. The green leaves against the black background are strong in the footage, but lose impact in the still. Again, use the Dodge tool to bring colour and brightness back.

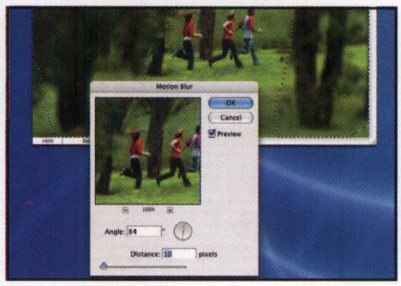
3 Conversely, some frames may look too colourful to work well as stills. Corridor.mov looks fine in motion but, as a still, the green glow cheapens the results. You can use the Sponge tool to desaturate the background, and the Blur tool to soften the Exit sign (which otherwise draws too much attention from the subject).

Part 7: Final checks

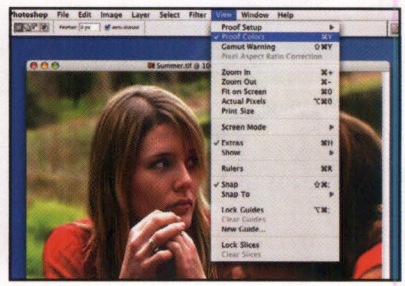
Final adjustments to image size, shape, blurring and colours get you ready for output to the printer...



1 It's best not to crop an image, unless you know that it's required in a specific shape; the more pixels you leave for the designer, the better. If you do crop, always keep an uncropped copy, just in case.

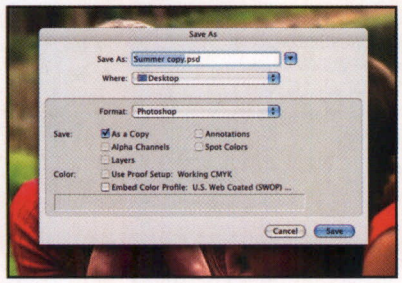


2 For shots that contain movement, you can give the image a more dynamic feeling by increasing the motion blurring. Select the blurred areas, feather the selection, then apply the Motion Blur filter to exaggerate the effect.

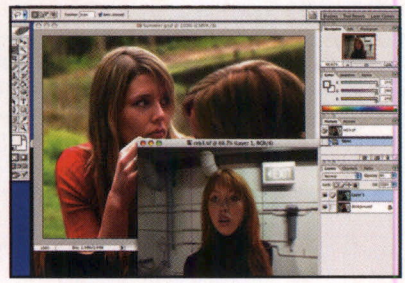


3 As you work, you should keep checking how the results look in your CMYK proof. With all the work done, check your image again, zooming in on details. This is your last chance to make adjustments before switching modes.

4 It's a good idea to save a copy of your adjusted image in RGB mode. Then, when you're sure the image is ready for print, go to Image>Mode, and change from RGB to CMYK. If you've checked your image as you've worked, there should be no surprises when you change modes.



5 Save your image as a TIF or *Photoshop* file – whatever format you choose, don't use any compression. The image you've created is ideal for print, but will also give you better on-screen results than raw DV, and can be used on web pages or in PowerPoint presentations.



6 If possible, perform a test print on the equipment that will be used to print your posters, covers or leaflets. If you're using your own printer, you can keep testing as you work; but if you're using a commercial printer, test your end result before submitting the job for mass printing. ca-p

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Decay effects

As powerful as *Photoshop* is for touching up photos, and for creating new and vibrant images, it's just as useful for taking your imagery the other way...

Dirty, decaying, diseased, distressed; not the most common terms that come to mind when thinking of design and illustration. And yet that's where we're going with this tutorial. It should give you various ideas of how to add a bit of age to an image, make them look more worn-out using painted textures, and how to make things look a lot less... well, new.

We'll also touch on a lot of familiar aspects in *Photoshop*, including layers, marquees, masks, level adjustments, and the use of the Filter menu. We didn't want the finished piece to be that linear, so we've tried to go into increased detail when creating textures, so that you can get an idea of the source material to photograph and manipulate.

We've tried to be as accurate as possible when referring to where the various tools can be found, but when you're distressing photographs with textures remember that it's not an exact science. You could follow this tutorial to the letter or you could just as easily use different values for each layer and still create an effective piece.

Expertise provided by Tim Seelig. Tim is a freelance illustrator and designer, currently designing a collective book of illustrations for a UK publisher, and he's recently completed some concepts for Miramax Films. He can be contacted through **[w]** www.debutart.com.

All the components needed to complete this tutorial can be downloaded from: ftp://ftp.futurenet.com/pub/arts/cdfiles/cap67_tutorial_decay.zip.

Part 1: Setting the scene

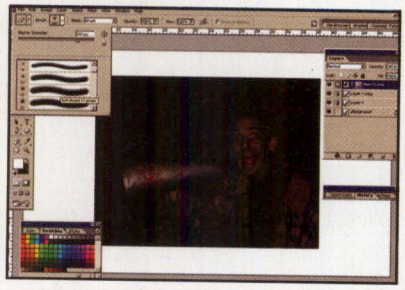
Choose some initial values to create the basis of your piece...

Keep your pictures

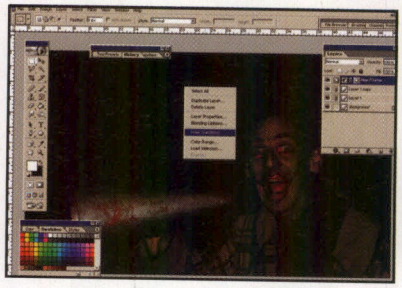
Even if photos don't come out as expected, you should keep them for possible use in future projects. This is easier with digital technology, but it's worth keeping printed photos too, so every so often you can go through them when you need a new texture. Your eye will soon get trained to spot these.

1 Download the source files from ftp://ftp.futurenet.com/pub/arts/cdfiles/cap67_tutorial_decay.zip. Then open layer1.jpg. Create a copy by dragging the thumbnail in the Layers palette down to the 'Create new layer' button. Now choose the Overlay blending mode in the same window.

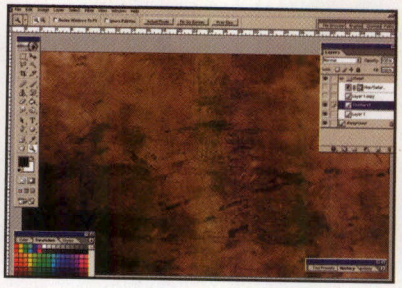
2 Create a new fill/adjustment layer from the Layers palette and select Hue/Saturation (next to the 'Create new layer' button). Check the Colourise box and set the Hue to 23, Saturation to 20, and leave Lightness at 0.



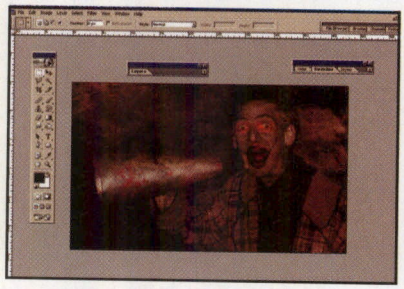
3 Select the Eraser tool, and set it to a soft round brush. Now erase from the area over the megaphone, the Hue/Saturation layer. Use a smaller size (with Opacity set at 50 per cent) for around the eyes and mouth. You'll have to repeat this during the tutorial, so the mouth and eyes remain consistent.



4 Link the top three layers and Free Transform to the edges of the canvas. Note that when working in a larger sized image, check the 'Maintain aspect ratio' box before resizing. Move the layers to the top left, then drag and expand from the bottom-right transform box to the bottom-right corner.



5 Paste 'texture1' in between 'layer1' and 'layer1 copy'. At this stage, this is the main canvas, so group all of these layers from the 'Create new set option' at the bottom of the Layers palette (folder icon third from the left).



6 If you're wondering how to go about creating a similar texture like this, there are literally hundreds of ways you can do it. Most of these processes involve a digital camera or a scanner, and having some gouache and/or acrylics helps as well.

Mixing up materials

Let your imagination take over when mixing painted and photographic materials...

Get some paper, and brush on some gouache or acrylics, thickly so you get some well-defined brush strokes. Also photograph rust marks, or stone, or anything that looks weathered or rough. Put it on the computer and then play around with the Hue/Saturation, and Levels tools. This will adjust how much the light/dark parts of textures stand out. Then play around more by taking one texture, duplicating the image as a layer, rotating it 180 degrees then using the layer tools to combine the two.

Alternatively, before combining the two, use the Gaussian Blur tool, located in the Filter menu. Now blend. It's about letting your curiosity get the better of you. Here, we use a painted wall, but with bits of moss on it, combined with the bottom corner of a painting which was scanned at 300dpi. The Gaussian Blur technique was then used, followed by Hue/Saturation to colourise the whole image to a sepia tone.

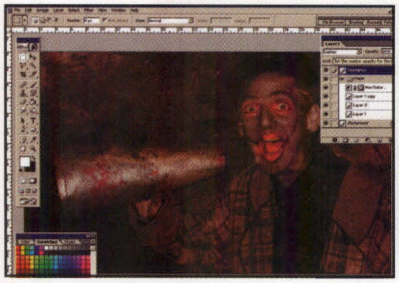
Paint your own textures or use photographs of natural materials to create decaying effects.

Part 2: Start combining textures

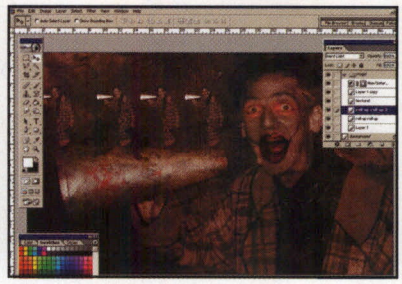
Combine textures to create a pattern that will make your composition look even freakier...

Making patterns

You can make patterns from a texture by flattening it and copying it into the pattern maker. Within pattern maker, make sure you check the 'Use clipboard as sample' and generate a pattern. If you don't like it, you can revert and change the settings and try again. Then take this new pattern and overlay it onto your blended photograph layer.

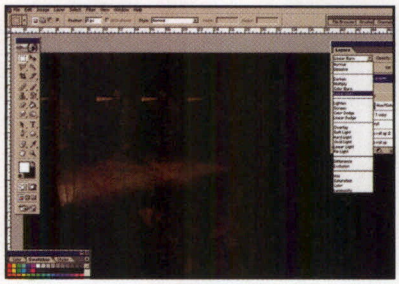


1 Turn on the other layers, and make sure 'texture1' is selected. Change the blending mode in the Layers palette to Screen. Add texture2 as the top layer, change the blending mode to Lighten and reduce the Opacity of the layer to 40 per cent.

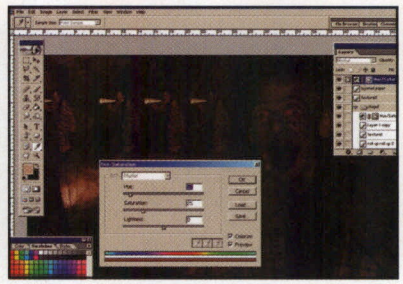


2 Take the image of the four clowns and place them on top of the megaphone. Make sure they follow the line of the megaphone by selecting the Rectangular Marquee tool, followed by Free Transform. Now adjust the layer blend to Hard Light and duplicate the layer.

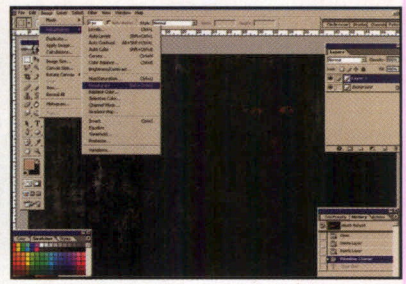
3 The next layer to drop into the image is 'layered paper.jpg'. Going back to creating textures, this is another good background to practise with. Just take a load of sheets of blank paper and overlap them to make a background of rectangles and squares.



4 Make sure the 'layered paper' image is at the top of the Layers palette and adjust the blending mode to Linear Burn, at which point you'll lose most of the right side. Now turn down the Opacity of the layer to approximately 53 per cent.



5 Create a new adjustment layer and select Hue/Saturation. Make the Hue 32 and Saturation 25. As before, select the Eraser tool and, using the soft brush, go over the mouth and the eyes with the brush Opacity set to 50 per cent. Also go over the smaller figures, and give them some variety by adjusting the Opacity of the brush.

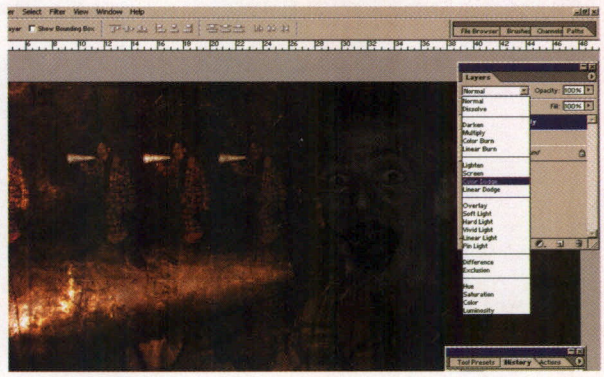


6 Everything up until now has been flattened (in the bottom of the pull-down layer menu) to prevent slow-down (at this point, the image was already taking up 300MB at 300dpi). Now place the layer named texture3.jpg.

Adding depth to your textures

Take your textures to a deeper level with the Quick Mask tool...

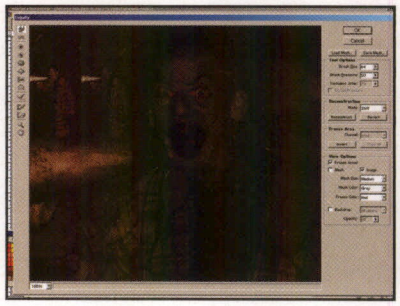
Take your newly created texture and adjust the blend to Colour Dodge, and then erase over the mouth and eyes of the main figure. Go to the original photograph of our clown (layer1.jpg), and copy and paste his head into the main image. Resize using the Free Transform tool (if applicable) and adjust the Opacity to see if you're lined up. If you want to be more accurate then use the Quick Mask tool and select the head, making sure black is the foreground colour. In Quick Mask, select the Paintbrush and paint over the head in the main image with a soft brush. Go back into normal edit mode, and make sure the head is selected (you may need to inverse the selection, which can be done from the selection menu). With the selection in the main image, go to Edit>Paste Into. Now you've got the image masked so you won't go all over the place. Also make sure this latest layer is desaturated. Apply the Colour Dodge mode. If you feel the ear is a tad bright, select the Eraser tool and a large-ish soft brush, and gently erase from the current layer.



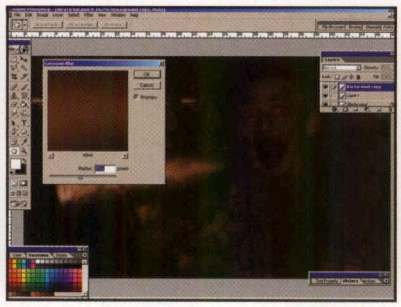
Use the Quick Mask tool to isolate parts of the image for individual adjustments.

Part 3: Little things

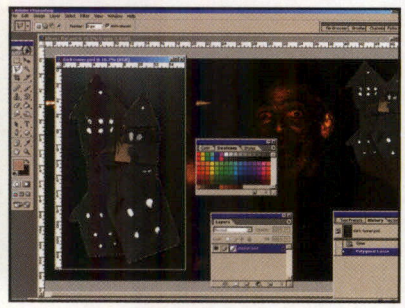
Take care of the small details to refine your illustration...



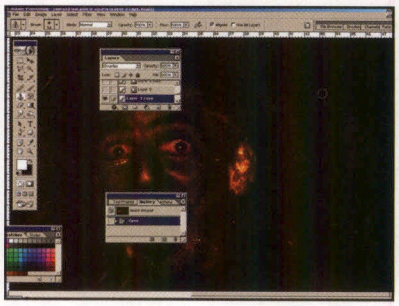
1 The spiky teeth are achieved by going to the flattened main layer, and using either the Smudge tool, or Liquify, in the Filter menu. In Liquify, select the Warp tool and use a small brush size to adjust the teeth and a larger one to adjust the facial expression.



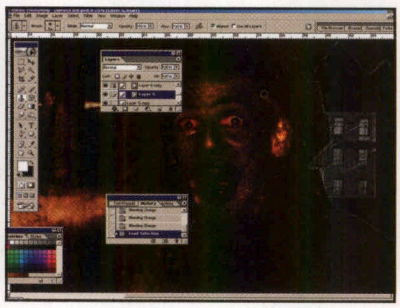
2 Now give the image a slightly more 'moist' look. Select the background layer and duplicate it. Now go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur. Adjust the Radius, and reduce the Opacity of the layer to 80 per cent. Change the blending mode to Overlay.



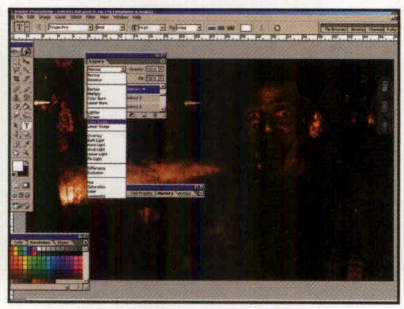
3 Now add to the background. Open the darktower.jpg and use the Polygon Lasso tool to surround the *Blue Peter*-style cardboard tower. Copy and paste into the main image. Select the Paintbrush with a soft brush and paint around the bottom of the image filling the space to the shoulder of the clown.



4 Select the Clone Stamp tool (with a soft brush) and choose an area of the tower layer without white spots. Now paint over the white spots. When you've finished, select the Overlay blending mode, and duplicate the layer.



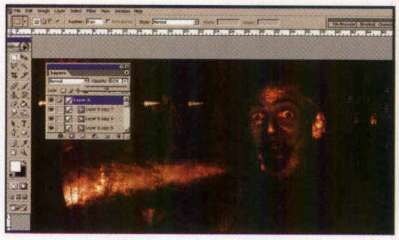
5 Open the windows.psd from the cover CD, and copy and paste into the layer transparency of the higher tower layer by going to the Options menu for that layer and selecting Layer Transparency. Now go to Edit>Paste Into. Then manoeuvre the layer to fill the bottom-left part of the tower.



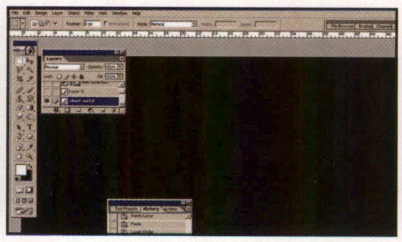
6 Select Soft Light and duplicate the layer. Change the duplicate to Colour Dodge. Repeat these duplicate layer steps for the top left-hand side. Set the first to Hard Light, and the second to Colour Dodge. For the top right side set both layers to Colour Dodge. In the bottom right, set the first layer to Colour Dodge and the second to Overlay.

Part 4: (Dis)stressed out

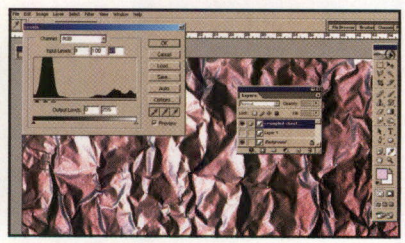
Add some crumpled metal effects to the background of your composition...



1 The next adjustment is to bring out the area around the eyes and the right cheek. Copy the face. Then use the Eraser tool around the face, and adjust the Opacity to around 50 per cent. Set the blending mode to Lighten.

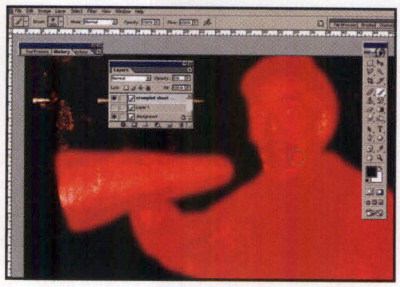


2 Open the 'crumpled metal sheet.psd'. This stuff is great – it's like negative tin foil. It needs some adjustments for this image because it isn't showing up particularly well. So change the levels to make it brighter. If you ever come back to this tutorial, scan in a new piece of screwed up tin foil – you'll see why in the next step.



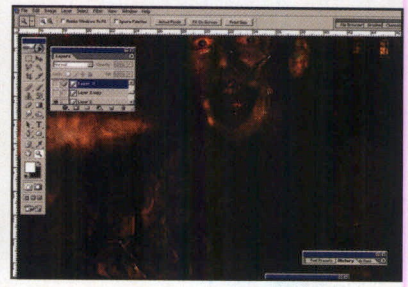
3 Go to Image>Adjustments>Levels. Experiment with the values. Here, we used the levels 8, 1.00, 49. Once confirmed, go to the Quick Mask tool, select the Paintbrush, black to the foreground, and turn the Opacity of the layer to 0 per cent.

(Dis)stressed out continued



4 We're now going to separate the layer into two distinct areas. That which is over the main clown figure, and the other being everything else. Paint over the main figure, including the megaphone, and then go back into standard mode.

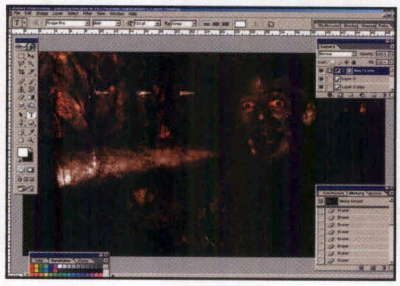
5 With the area now selected, click on the Marquee tool. Choose 'Create layer via cut' from the tool options. The one pictured here has the crumpled sheet over the figure switched off. The other sheet layer has been blended using Soft Light.



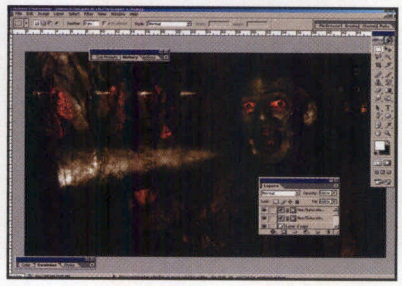
6 Here, we erase a lot of the far right-hand side (over the house and right side of the jacket). We also cleared the left side of face, leaving the crumpled effect over the right only. Experiment, because you might want to give the guy completely different crumpled areas to this.

Part 5: Finishing off

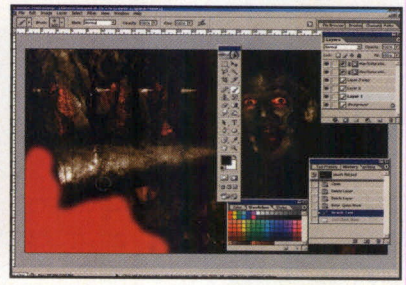
Here are some options to think about when completing your project...



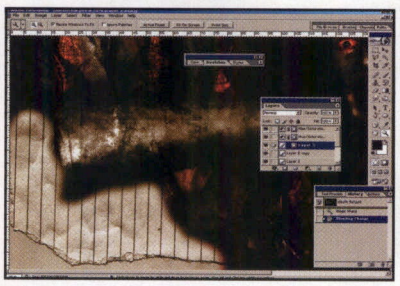
1 As well as erasing the areas you want, try playing around with the Opacity of the Eraser brush. This makes some areas stick out more than others. Or simply play around with the Opacity of the layers. Now apply a colour adjustment layer.



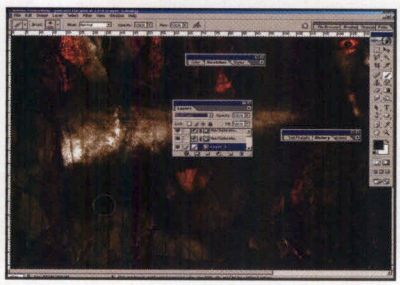
2 Erase the areas of the eyes and mouth as usual, as well as other areas like the house, the small figures on the megaphone and so on. You could also flatten the whole thing again, copy the entire image, blur it to a degree and then overlay it.



3 You could make some of the darker features stand out. Any number of ways we've explored earlier can achieve this. Here, we selected the layer containing the metal sheet, and used the Mask Edit tool to paint over the area we want to select.

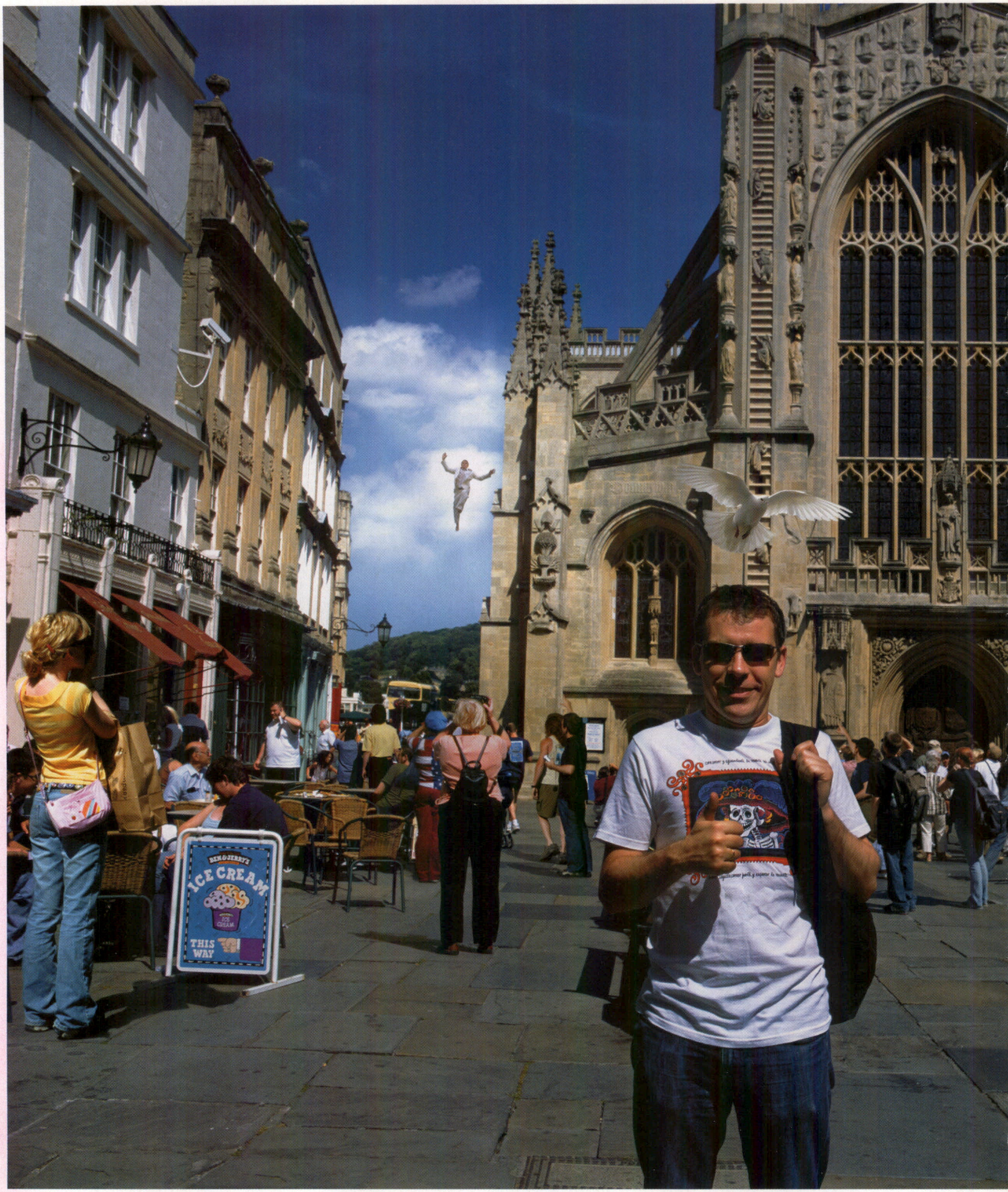


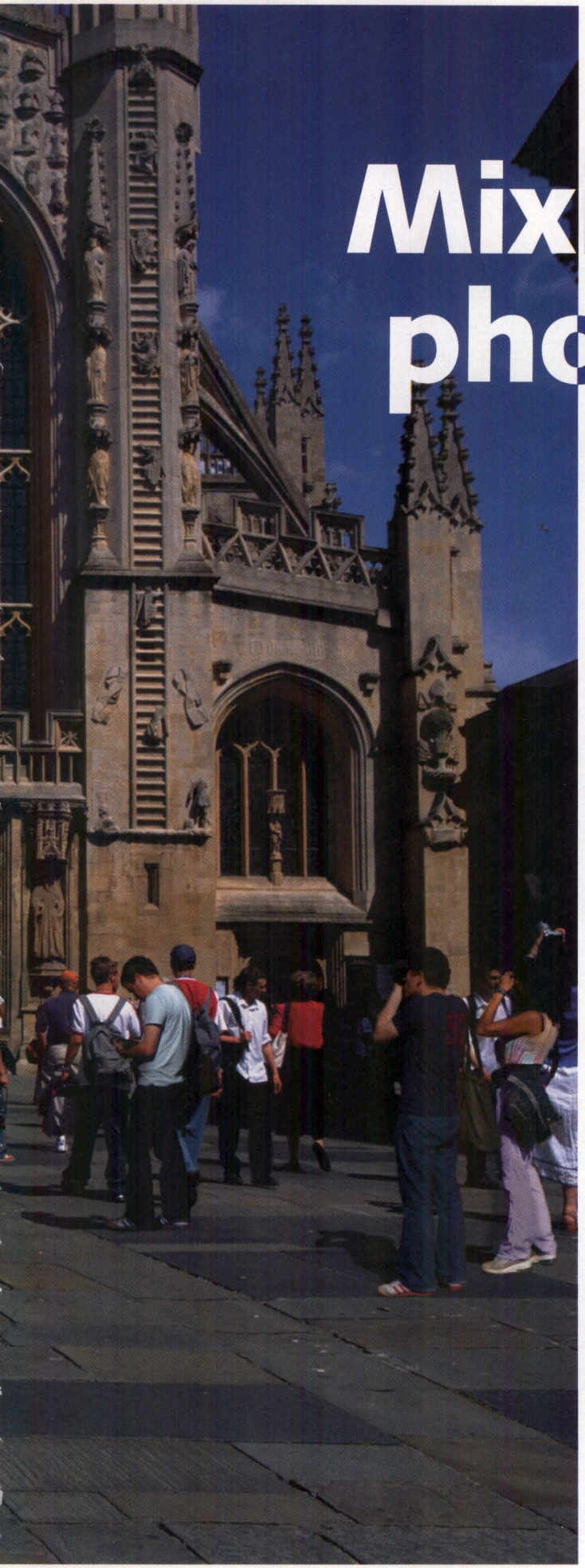
4 Go back to Standard Edit mode, inverse selection, and create an adjustment layer, selecting Levels. Set the levels to 0, 1.18, 145, and bring in the torn paper layer and paste it into the selection created in the previous step. Use the Magic Wand to select the area outside the paper, and delete (make sure the tolerance is around 20).



5 Delete the selected area. Now adjust the layer blend of the torn paper to Soft Light, then select the Paintbrush tool, soft brush, and quite large, and paint around the lower area of the megaphone to give the effect of a shadow.

6 You could also flatten the whole thing again, make a duplicate layer of the entire image, blur it a little and then overlay it. This will add a little moisture to the image. Or if you use Lighten instead, it makes it almost glisten. The possibilities from here could go on forever. The trick is knowing when to stop... ca-p


BEN & JERRY'S
ICE CREAM
THIS WAY



Mixing photographic mediums

Photoshop filters enable you to correct photographic errors, spice up images, and combine 35mm and digital mediums effectively. Paul Smith shows you how to make your creations more realistic...

Transforming a standard image into an extraordinary one through the use of filters is a real balancing act. On the one hand there's the temptation to try all the tricks in the book, which can work, but the resulting images often carry that stamp of 'I've been Photoshopped'. Alternatively, you can be subtle with your choice of manipulation and enhance an image in such a way that it's impossible to spot the alterations. The latter option is the method that I tend to use and, here, I aim to explain a few of the creative tricks that I employ.

The following tutorial demonstrates how to use Lighting effects, Motion blur, Sharpen, Grain and also touches upon a few interesting combinations needed when blending different photographic mediums together. With some technical tip-offs, you'll learn to worship your filters and let them show you the light...

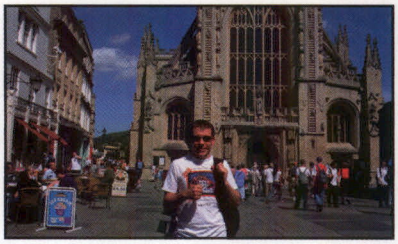
Expertise provided by Paul Smith. Paul was one of a small group of photographers in the mid 1990s who embraced the creative possibilities of photography and digital technology using computer software such as Photoshop to make crucial photographic work. Visit **[w]** www.paulmsmith.co.uk.

Part 1: Raw elements

Creating the right images can be half fun and half nightmare...

Source material

Using a medium format camera then drum-scanning the traditional film formats offers a quality and ease of use that surpasses that of its younger cousin, the digital camera. However, a high-quality SLR digital camera is now as good as its equivalent 35mm film camera and, in some cases, it's superior.



1 File size is initially dictated by the first image you choose as your background. The background element can also help you decide on the grain/pixel structure of the final image. This image was a drum-scanned medium format transparency, with a file size of 200MB.

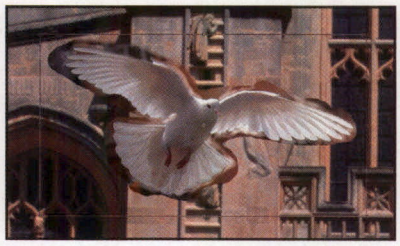
2 This additional element was shot using a Nikon D100, set on High quality. It's good to have a large variety of images to choose from. I was unsure of the angle I would need to create a good blend, so shooting with a digital camera was the cheapest and easiest option.

3 The saying "Don't work with children and animals" should have a sub-section, "especially when they're wild" (animals, that is), because shooting something as simple as a white bird can take a full day. But with a loaf of bread and the D100, the desired result was captured eventually.

Part 2: Combining images

Mixing up images from different sources can create problems...

1 Create a selection around the area needed and apply a soft feather (Select>Feather) to soften the cut. Then copy and paste the selected area into the background image. By having extra image around the bird you might be able to create a gentle transition, as the backgrounds are similar in tone.



2 Go to Edit>Transform>Scale and resize the image, holding down Shift to constrain the proportions and avoid any distortion. Creating the correct scale for an added section like this can be a tricky task, so use another part of your image that's on a similar focal plane as a reference point.

3 The background is scanned, giving it a grain structure which appears as a texture and slightly sharper than the digital layer of the bird. If these differences aren't balanced, the two layers will never look as if they're part of the same layer.

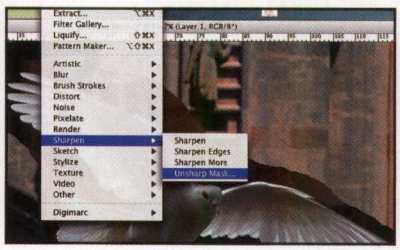
Part 3: Sharpening the image

Use the minimum amount of sharpening when blending the white bird into the background...

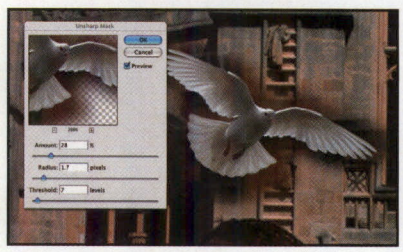
Quality in, quality out

There's little you can do with a completely out-of-focus image. *Photoshop* can work wonders to correct an image that's slightly off focus, but it's always best to start any project with the best quality image you can achieve, rather than totally relying on the program to solve all your problems.

1 This filter is effective when used in moderation. If you increase the image size too much, your sharpening will be all too apparent. Zoom in to look at the changes and you'll be able to see the changes in pixels. Sharpening will also enhance any blemishes or imperfections in the image.



2 Within the Filter menu you'll find a choice of four Sharpen Filters. Out of this selection, Unsharp Mask will give the largest range of options and subsequently the greatest control over your adjustments. By selecting Filter>Unsharp Mask you'll open the dialog box.



3 The Amount option determines how much of the edge of the image is affected by the filter; Radius dictates the pixel range that will have its colours increased in contrast; Threshold establishes how different in value the pixels are on either side of an edge before they're sharpened.

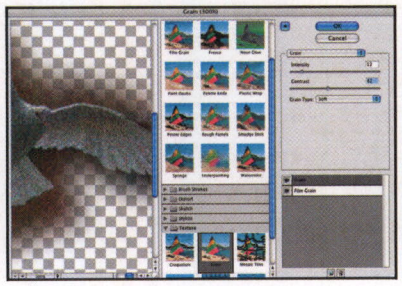
Part 4: Get into the grain

Lose that digital camera image look by making your image look grainy...

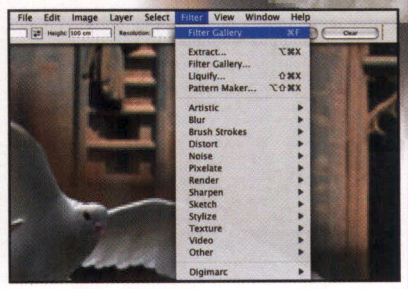
Preview problems

Filter Gallery is a fantastic new combination tool that enables you to blend a range of different filters. The preview area is large and clear, but it only previews the layer to which you're applying the filter. As you're trying to match the texture of two layers, this creates a problem. By rescaling the base image and the preview area until they match, you can get an indication of how they'll match when combined.

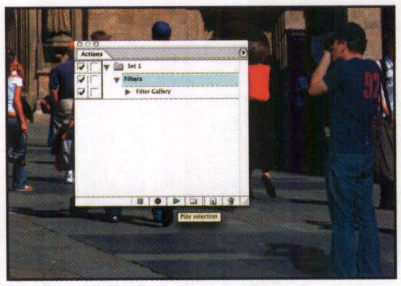
1 Once sharpened, the image still needs a texture to create visually unified layers, because the source materials were from different photographic media. With *Photoshop CS* you get two main filters for this: Artistic-Film Grain or Texture-Grain. But we can use the Filter Gallery and take advantage of both.



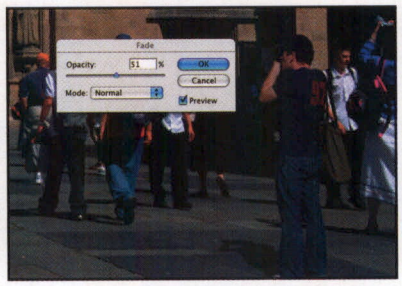
2 Once the Filter Gallery is open, select Film Grain and adjust the Grain/Highlight area and Intensity until the texture of layer matches that of the underlying one. You can then add a new effect layer and combine this filter with Grain, which gives you the added options of Grain Type and Contrast control.



3 When adding a number of layers that all need Grain filters, you should save your process via actions. This enables you to apply the same filtration to all your layers, or you could try using the last filter at the top of the Filters sub-menu to repeat the effect.



4 To use the Action option, open the Window>Actions palette, and select New Action. Then name your action. Then carry out the filtration adjustments as previously discussed. When completed, click 'stop recording' on the Actions palette. If you now need to add grain to a future layer, select the desired layer and press play.



5 Once a filter is applied, it becomes clear as to the success of your matching textures. If the desired effect hasn't been achieved, try using the Fade option (Edit>Fade) directly after you've applied your filter. This option enables you to reduce the Opacity of the additional filter.

6 Should you still have failed to find your perfect match, try experimenting with the mode options. This area can be found on the Fade palette and appears as a hidden list next to the Mode setting. To create an even blend, Normal or Overlay modes work well.

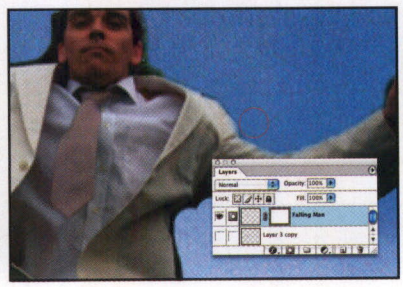
Part 5: Lighting problems

Transform the brightness from flat light to burning sunshine all in one filter...

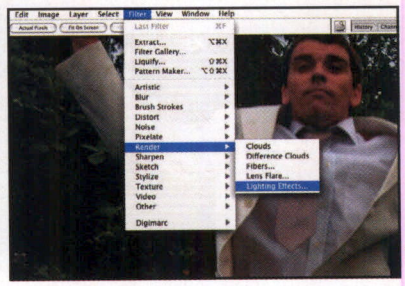
Creative use of shadows

When it comes to art, rules are there to be broken, so any advice given is intended as a guide. In the final image, the rules of nature have been ignored in relation to shadows. Each shadow points in the direction of the figure appearing in the sky, helping draw your eye to this area of the image.

1 To create the falling figure, I used a trampoline, taking a large range of digital images that give me the options of correct angles and facial expression. The problem I was faced with was that the lighting on the figure was distinctly different from that of the Bath Abbey shot.

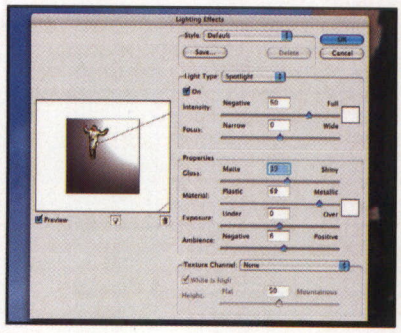


2 When matching a filter to the background, it's best to create your layers first. In this case, I took a rough cut around the figure and then dropped it onto the background. I then added a layer mask, which enabled me to remove any unwanted background traces.

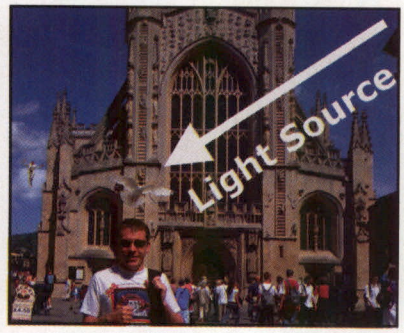


3 The key to solving the lighting problem was to use the Lighting Effects filter. This filter enables you to simulate a variety of lighting configurations. It works best when it's not trying to reverse the existing lighting. As this image was shot in natural flat light, this filter is the solution.

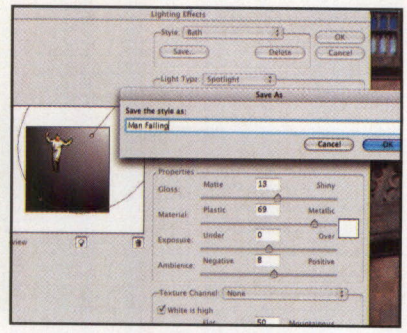
Lighting problems continued...



4 This filter is memory hungry, so when possible work on a small area or free up as much memory as possible. As you'll quickly discover with this tool, the options and combination of effects are limitless. For this image I've applied a single spot and Gloss +13.



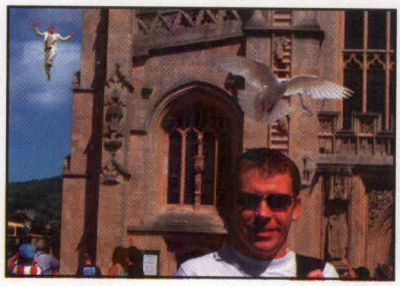
5 If a good match is to be achieved with the background, you must establish from which direction the original light source originated. In this case, it was behind the photographer and to the right. You then need to rotate the light directional handle to match the background light direction.



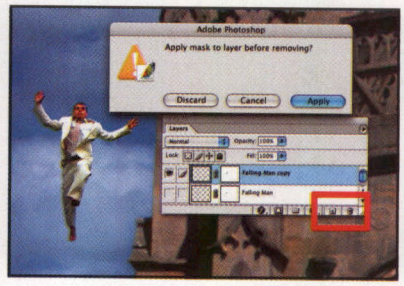
6 If you're likely to need your configuration again, you have the option of saving your settings. Select Save on the palette, name your setting and it will then be saved as a style that can be loaded when needed. This filter only gives you a small preview, so you'll find the Fade option extremely useful.

Part 6: Get moving

Why would you blur a perfectly sharp image? We give you an example...

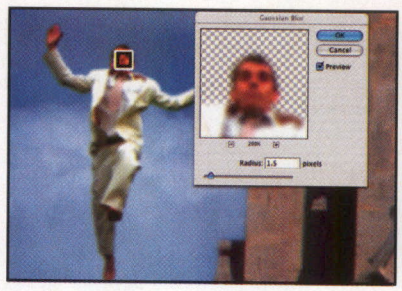


1 Depth of field is a photographic term used for establishing the focal range of an image or what will be in focus. With this image, the depth of field was such that the thumbs-up man is sharp and our falling figure is sharp, although he should be slightly out of focus.

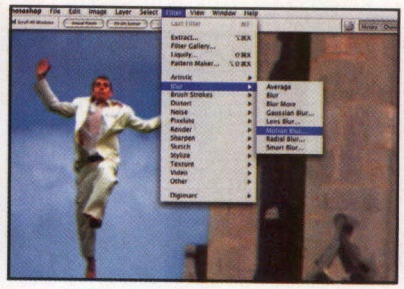


2 Before using the blur filters, apply your layer mask to avoid any bleed from the masked areas. You could always duplicate the layer prior to this. So, if you're unhappy with the results, you can return to your original. To apply, pick up the layer mask and place it in the trash within the Layers palette.

3 To resolve the depth-of-field problem, Blur Filters can help. The new Lens Blur option in CS can be used, but even with a kicking G5 it's painfully slow on large files. Try Gaussian Blur, which is an easy-to-use yet effective filter.



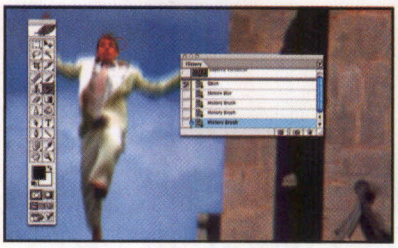
4 To find a small element in the preview box, use the cursor on your main image, Click the area you wish to preview and it'll be located within the preview area. Adding the grain filter will sharpen your image slightly, so compensate for this when deciding on the level of blur.



5 The figure was supposed to appear as if falling, so it was necessary to add some movement to the limbs. This can be achieved via the Motion Blur filter, which blurs the layer in a particular direction and with different intensities.

6 Typing a value or rotating the directional arm to the desired position sets the angle of the blur. The spread is dictated by the distance value (23 in this case), which was far greater than initially needed. Using History, some of the image can be restored.

Get moving continued...



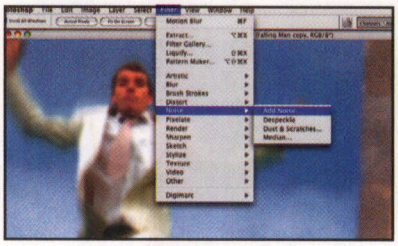
7 Using the History Brush to restore unsuccessful area changes to their original state can be employed with all your filters. Open the History palette and click the left column to select the source for the History Brush. Select the History Brush from the Tools palette – don't opt for the Art History Brush.

8 Standard brush options apply to the History Brush. Try using a low opacity setting to gradually recover the desired areas. To create the effect of movement, yet retain the facial features of the figure, the areas around the face and subtly on the body have been restored.

9 An alternative to removing the applied filter is to decide where you wish to apply the filter and create selections. All filters will then work within the designated areas. If used in combination with a gradient mask or feathered edge, the effects can be effective without being intrusive.

Part 7: Looking too good

To avoid the heavily retouched look, try adding some Noise...



1 After shrinking, blurring and motion blurring the figure, all the original texture inherent within the image has been lost. Before adding the final grain, the image needs Noise to lose the retouched feel and help with the blend. Noise adds randomly distributed pixels with varying colour levels.

2 Two options are available for deciding how the Noise will be distributed: Uniform gives a random but subtle effect; Gaussian has a far harsher, speckled effect. The quantity of Noise is set in percentages – the higher the setting, the more pixels will be added.

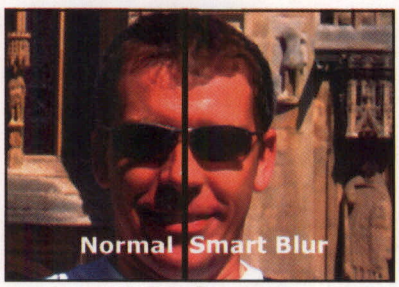
3 For this image, a low level of Noise was selected, but higher than needed, so Fade could then be used to achieve a fine adjustment. Finally, by lowering the opacity level on the layer and allowing some of the background tone to bleed through, a good match was found.

Part 8: More filters

With so many filters available, you should take the time to experiment...

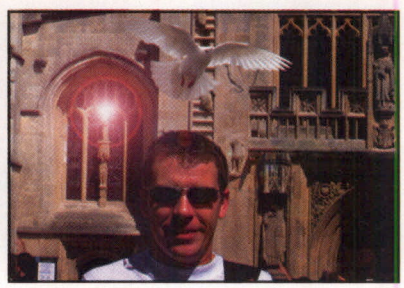
Artistic filters

Every time you revisit the Filters section, you'll find something new, improved, inspiring or just fun to try out. My personal taste tends to exclude a number of the artistic filters, but I have seen some amazing results achieved with these tools in the right hands. The problem is you see more disasters than successes, so look carefully at your results – is that coloured pencil effect really as great as you first thought?

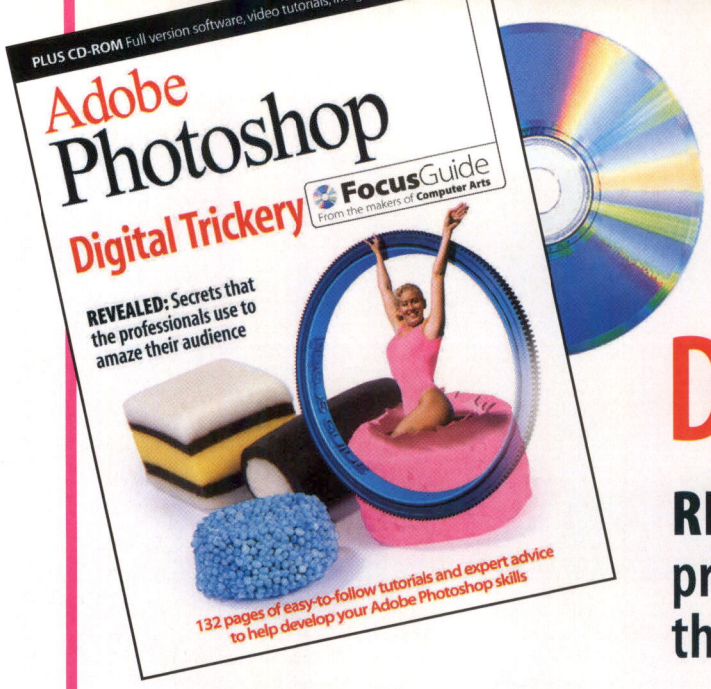


1 Smart Blur smoothes the tonal differences. Used at a high setting, the results are similar to a digitally animated image. With restrained use, you can smooth out wrinkles and uneven skin tones. Radius locates dissimilar pixels to blur. Threshold establishes the different pixel values before blurring.

2 Liquify can warp, twirl, bloat, pucker and many other useful options. This huge filter can be used for creating trippy images or controlled manipulation. The effects can clearly be seen within the preview area before being applied. This is one of those memory hungry areas, so get the kettle on once used.



3 Lens Flare comes in a variety of lens matching effects. Often something photographers work hard to avoid, it can be applied to an image to add a little authenticity to a picture. This filter is often used on a coloured background to create a simple but effective template on which to start working. ca-p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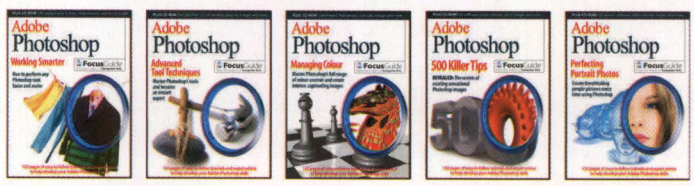

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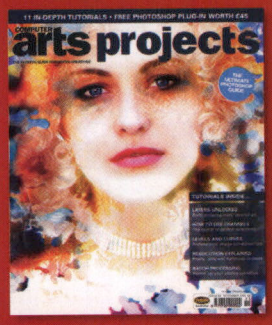

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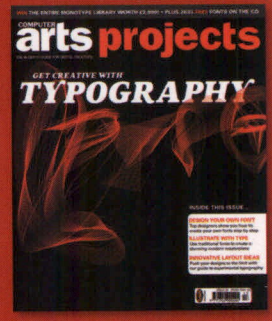

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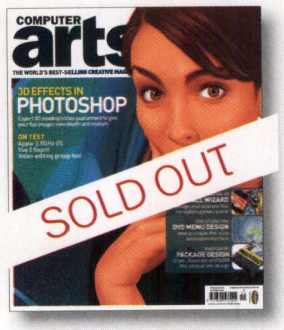

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Illustration: Jo Wong [w] www.joannewong.co.uk

Create your own Photoshop filters

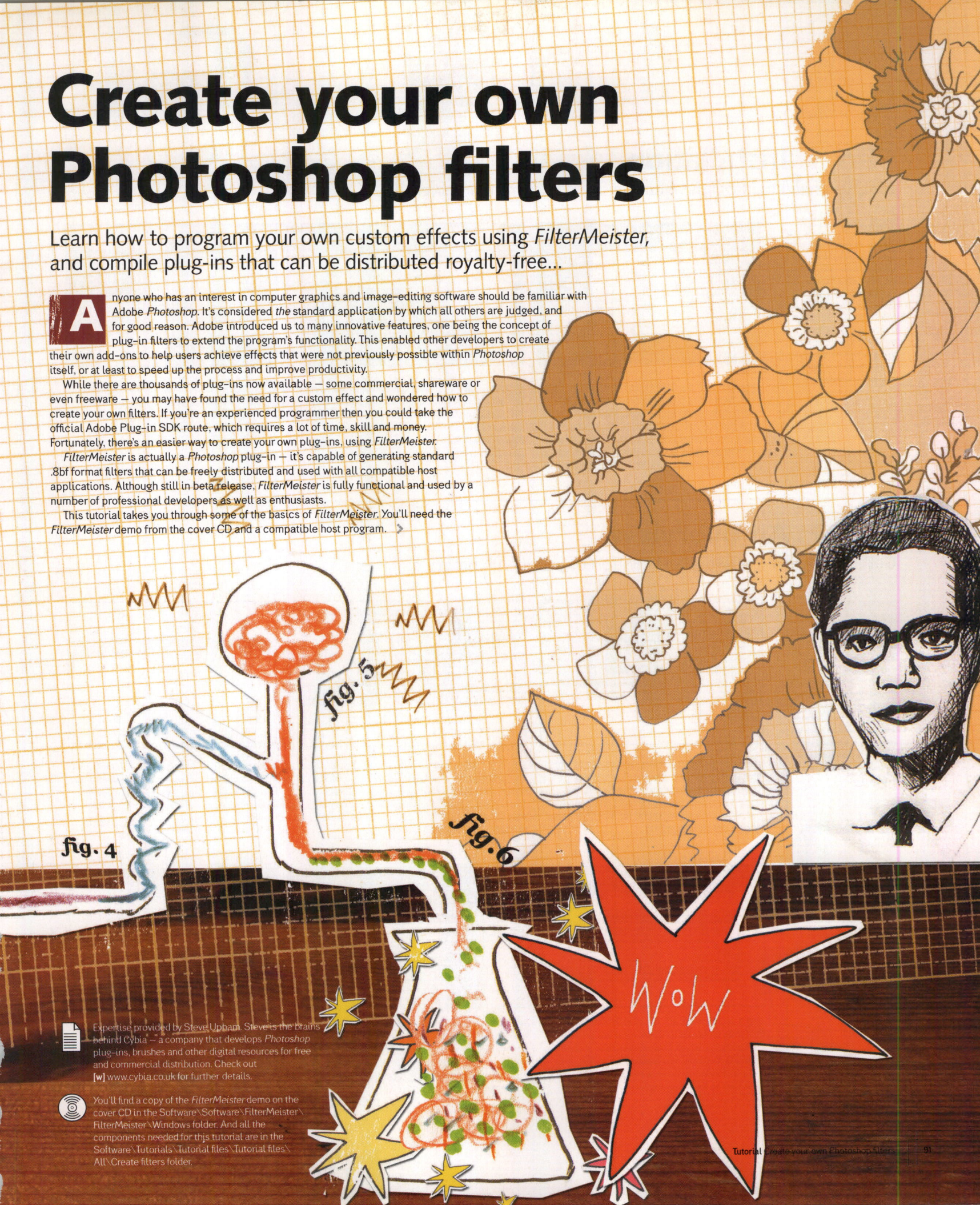
Learn how to program your own custom effects using *FilterMeister*, and compile plug-ins that can be distributed royalty-free...

Anyone who has an interest in computer graphics and image-editing software should be familiar with Adobe *Photoshop*. It's considered *the* standard application by which all others are judged, and for good reason. Adobe introduced us to many innovative features, one being the concept of plug-in filters to extend the program's functionality. This enabled other developers to create their own add-ons to help users achieve effects that were not previously possible within *Photoshop* itself, or at least to speed up the process and improve productivity.

While there are thousands of plug-ins now available – some commercial, shareware or even freeware – you may have found the need for a custom effect and wondered how to create your own filters. If you're an experienced programmer then you could take the official Adobe Plug-in SDK route, which requires a lot of time, skill and money. Fortunately, there's an easier way to create your own plug-ins, using *FilterMeister*.

FilterMeister is actually a *Photoshop* plug-in – it's capable of generating standard .8bf format filters that can be freely distributed and used with all compatible host applications. Although still in beta release, *FilterMeister* is fully functional and used by a number of professional developers as well as enthusiasts.

This tutorial takes you through some of the basics of *FilterMeister*. You'll need the *FilterMeister* demo from the cover CD and a compatible host program. >



Expertise provided by Steve Upham. Steve is the brains behind Cybia – a company that develops *Photoshop* plug-ins, brushes and other digital resources for free and commercial distribution. Check out **[w]** www.cybia.co.uk for further details.

You'll find a copy of the *FilterMeister* demo on the cover CD in the Software\Software\FilterMeister\FilterMeister\Windows folder. And all the components needed for this tutorial are in the Software\Tutorials\Tutorial files\Tutorial files\All\Create filters folder.

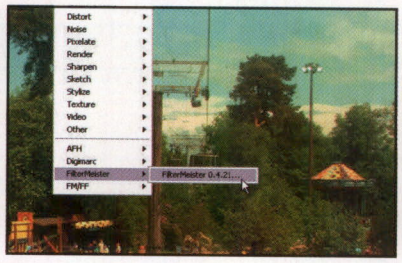
Part 1: Installation

First, you need to install the *FilterMeister* demo from the cover CD...

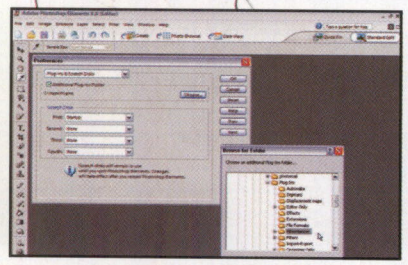
The first filter

The origin of plug-in creation tools can be traced back to 1994 when Filter Factory was introduced on the *Photoshop 3.0* CD-ROM. This tiny 'goodie' (as it was referred to back then) soon took on a life of its own thanks to a dedicated following of users on the internet. It offered ordinary people the chance to develop their own filter effects, with minimum skills or expense.

1 You'll find the *FilterMeister* demo on the cover CD in the Software\Software\FilterMeister\FilterMeister\Windows folder. Run the file AFH_FM_10_Beta4.exe and install into your host program's plug-in folder. For example, C:\Photoshop\Plugins\FilterMeister. Refer to your software documentation for more information regarding the correct location.



2 After the set-up process is complete, start your graphics program and check that *FilterMeister* has been successfully installed. If so, you'll notice a new entry in the Filter menu (FilterMeister> FilterMeister 0.4.21...). Open any RGB image and click this new menu item to launch the plug-in.



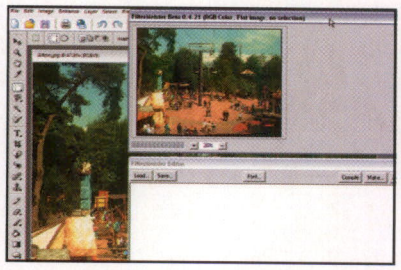
3 If you don't see the new entry in your Filter menu then you may need to configure your host settings to enable additional plug-in folders and locate where you installed *FilterMeister*. You must restart the program for the new settings to take effect.

Part 2: An overview

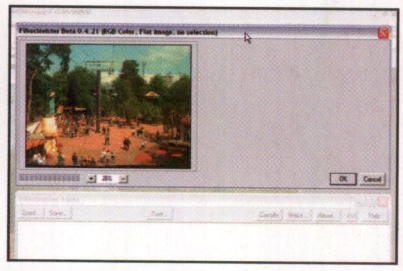
Getting to know the layout and controls of your demo program...

Discussion groups

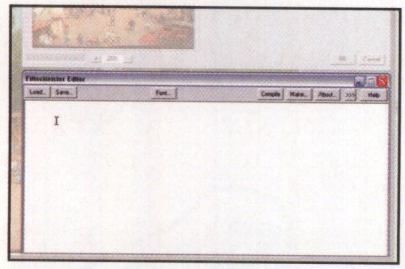
Alfredo Mateus founded the FFDG (Filter Factory Discussion Group) where users joined together online to share ideas and source code. It was an exciting time and many hundreds of plug-in filters were generated during this period. Most filters were distributed freely and a lot of websites dedicated to plug-ins were born. The group eventually disappeared, but several of the original members still develop plug-ins today.



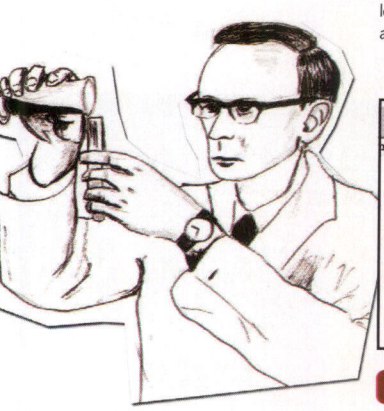
1 The *FilterMeister* dialog consists of two parts. The top area is the actual plug-in dialog window, while underneath contains a text box where you type in the source code, plus buttons to load, save, compile and create the filters. Let's take a closer look at each section...

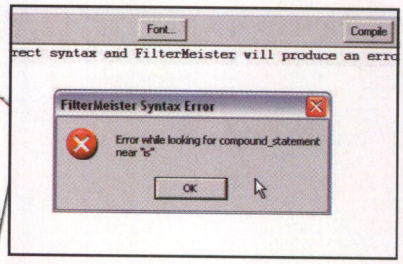


2 You'll notice that the main plug-in dialog elements are already provided for you, with an image-effects preview window, zoom buttons, a progress bar, OK and Cancel buttons. You do not have to add any additional code for these controls to work with their preset properties.

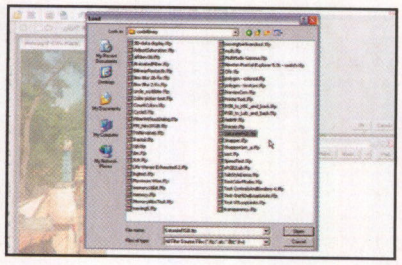


3 The bottom editor window is where the actual filter construction takes place. Type your source code in the text-box area. When you're ready to test your effect, click the Compile button and this will update the above plug-in dialog and you should then have a working filter preview.

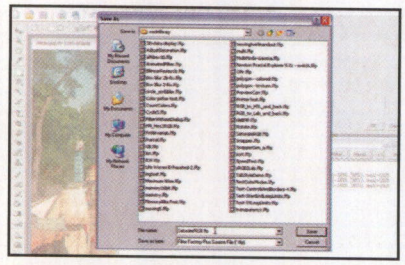




4 If you've made any mistakes in your source code syntax then *FilterMeister* will produce an error message, which prevents you from successfully compiling the code. You should refer to the documentation that came with the demo and take some time to learn the language.



5 You can import existing source code into *FilterMeister* by clicking on the Load... button. This will display another dialog, which enables you to browse for compatible files. You can open .ffp, .afs, .8bf (created with *Filter Factory* only), .ffw and .txt formats.

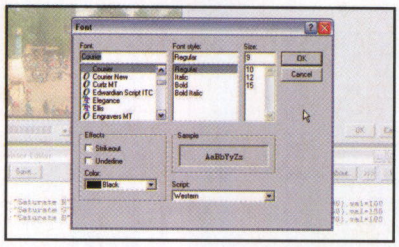


6 To save your source code, click the Save... button to invoke the Save As dialog. Browse your hard drive and save the file in a suitable location. It's important to save your source codes if you want to update and recompile your filters at a later date.

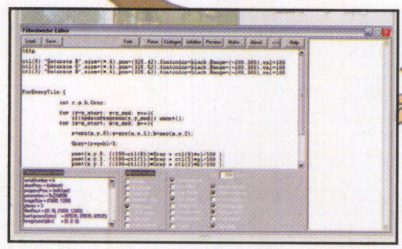
Overview continued...

Hail FilterMeister

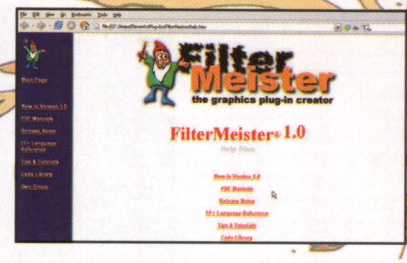
Filter Formula was hailed as the new replacement after *Filter Factory* and for a while it looked to have a promising future. Unfortunately, it was abandoned at some point and no new versions were ever released. *FilterMeister* then came onto the scene and developers have been supporting this tool ever since. Although still in Beta release, *FilterMeister* is already packed with powerful features that will appeal to serious programmers.



7 The editor window settings can be changed by clicking the Font... button and selecting a suitable style. The window, however, is a fixed size and doesn't provide much working space, so some users prefer to type code using an external text editor then cut and paste it into *FilterMeister*.



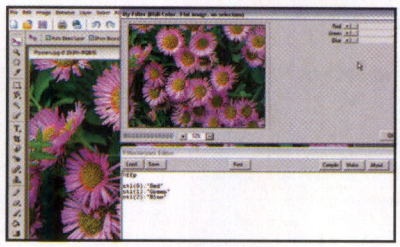
8 You may have noticed a button labelled '>>>' but it's probably not a good idea to display the extended window until you're more experienced at using *FilterMeister*. This section offers access to more in-depth features and should be used with caution. You have been warned.



9 If you get stuck at any time then click on the Help button and read through the documentation provided. The help file is in .htm format so you'll need a web browser installed. There are also three .pdf manuals included, which require Adobe *Reader* to view.

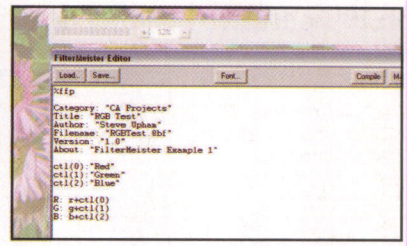
Part 3: First steps

Add some source code in the editor window to create a basic working effect...



1 So far we've only covered some of the preset dialog features. You'll need to manually add other controls using source code. Begin by opening the Sliders.ffp example, hit the Compile button and you'll see three sliders added to the dialog, but they won't produce any effects yet.

2 Next, you'll need to add more code to modify the image and link it to the sliders in order to make the effects variable. Open the RGBcode.ffp example and hit Compile, then see what happens. Changing the slider values will modify the overall red, green and blue balance.

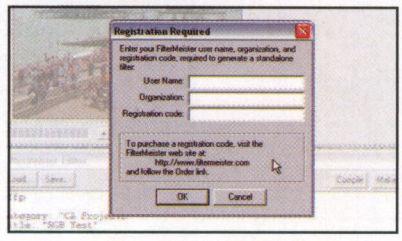


3 You now have your first working effect. You need to add additional code to identify the filter in the host menu if you plan on creating a standard .8bf format plug-in (this option is available to registered users only). Open the RGBTest.ffp file and study the code.

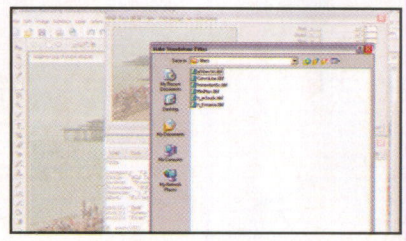
Part 4: Registration

You need to purchase a licence to create and distribute your plug-ins...

1 The demo version enables you to create effects and apply them through *FilterMeister*, but if you wish to create .8bf plug-ins that can be distributed then you need to purchase a licence. Go to **[w]** www.filtermeister.com and click on the Order page for more info.


Registration Required
Enter your FilterMeister user name, organization, and registration code, required to generate a standalone filter.
User Name:
Organization:
Registration code:
To purchase a registration code, visit the FilterMeister web site at:
http://www.filtermeister.com
and follow the Order link.
OK
Cancel

2 After purchasing a licence, you'll be sent an email with the registration details. Start *FilterMeister* and click on the Make... button, then enter your name, company and registration code. You can now build your own standard .8bf format filters which can be distributed royalty-free.



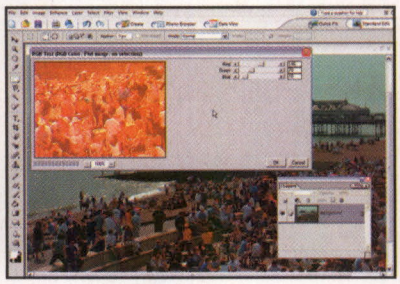
3 Go back and load the previous code example, press Compile, then the Make... button to generate a standalone filter. Make sure you save the *.8bf file in your host's plug-in folder. You'll need to restart in order for the new filter to appear in the menu.

Registration continued...

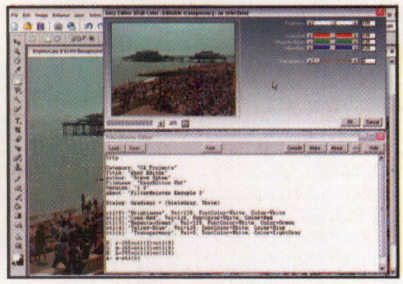
Mac filters

Mac users may feel left out here because *FilterMeister* is currently available for Windows only, but there's an alternative in the form of *Filter Foundry*, which is available for both Windows and Mac platforms. It's based on the original *Filter Factory* concept but offers better features and is free to download from the developer's website at **[w]** www.telegraphics.com.au/sw/.

4 After restarting your computer you should see your new plug-in entry in the Filter menu. Choose CA Projects>RGB Test.... If you can't find it, then check you saved the file in the correct folder and refer back to Step 3 of the Installation section of this tutorial.



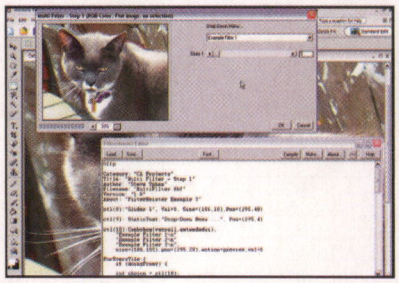
5 Open any RGB image and launch the new RGB Test plug-in to make sure that it works. It's extremely basic, but you've just made your first standalone *Photoshop* filter. Once you've successfully completed this simple example, you're ready to learn more.



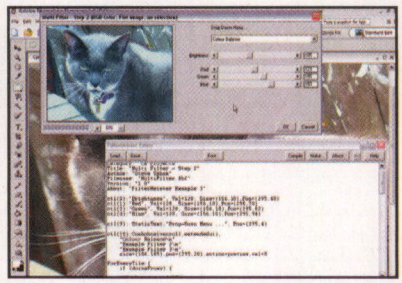
6 To illustrate how easy it is to build on this template, open the EasyEditor.ffp file and Compile. Study the code and see how the example RGBTest.ffp has been updated with a few extra lines to create a quick editing filter that controls brightness, RGB balance and transparency amount.

Part 5: Multiple effects

In this part, we build a filter that includes a number of different effects...

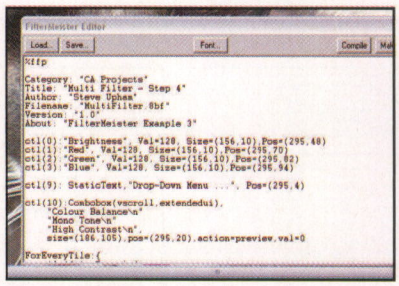


1 Now let's try something with additional features, such as a drop-down combo-box with multiple effects to choose from. Open the template MultiFilter01.ffp and you'll find a basic framework to build on. There are three different menu items included but no effect codes have been added yet.

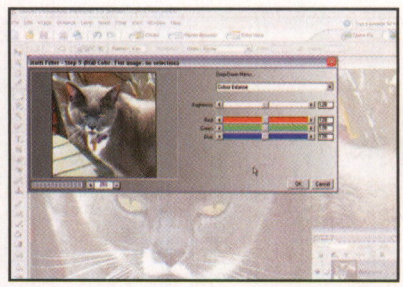


2 If we go back to the previous RGB example and re-use some of the code, we can replace the first menu item. Open the MultiFilter02.ffp file and compile it. You now have one functional filter within this dialog. Examine the code to see what's been added.

3 The next step is to replace the second drop-down menu item with another piece of working code. Again, we can re-use the last example, but making a minor alteration gives us a mono image instead of colour. Open the file MultiFilter03.ffp and test out the new effect.



4 Repeat this procedure for adding the third and final menu item at this point. Again, we're just using a very simple example code variation that produces a higher-contrast mono image. You can open the MultiFilter04.ffp file and check the updated code again if you wish.



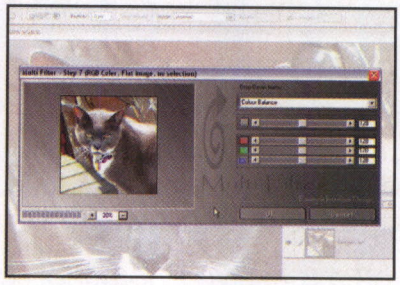
5 You may like to start customising the interface options at this stage. While many users stick with the standard dialog scheme, you may prefer to add more impact by specifying a particular colour or even a gradient fill in the background. You can also change the font and slider colours.

6 If you enjoy interface design then you'll be pleased to know that *FilterMeister* also supports bitmap image backgrounds. If you open the MultiFilter06.ffp file, you'll see an example of a small bitmap texture being used as a tiled backdrop in the plug-in dialog.

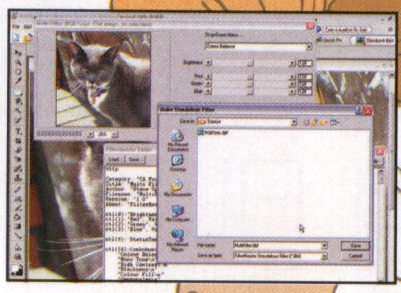
Multiple effects continued...

Professional filter creation

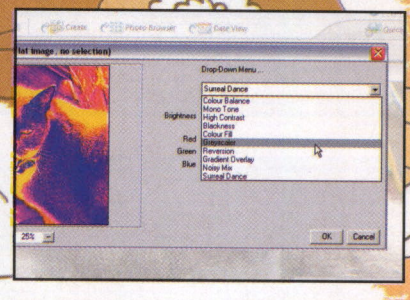
The only other option available to potential plug-in developers is the official Adobe *Photoshop* SDK, for which you have to now become an ASN member. This is the most difficult and expensive way to get into programming filters, so it's best left to the professionals. There is also a different commercial *Photoshop* SDK now available for Delphi and Borland C++ users from **[w]** www.centaurix.com.



7 Of course, you can create even more elaborate background designs if you wish. Here is an example using a bitmap image to fill the whole dialog area. The button images are just part of the bitmap and coding used to define the areas and apply button properties.



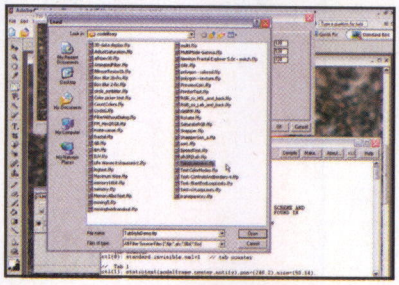
8 That's enough about the interface for now; let's return to the actual filter coding and add a few extra effects to the combo-box. Open MultiFilter.ffp and check out the code. You'll notice there are now ten filters in total, all variations of colour-modification effects.



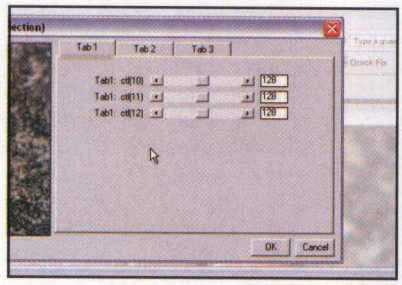
9 Registered users may wish to create a standalone version, so repeat the create and install procedure as before then test the new Multi Filter plug-in. Even though it's only another fairly basic example, you'll get the idea behind multiple effect dialogs and code variations.

Part 6: More samples

In this final part, we encourage you to explore some more demo codes...

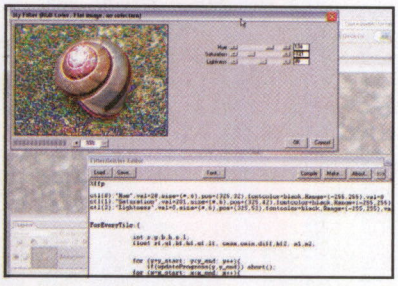


1 Learning a programming language takes time, and this tutorial can only provide you with a brief overview of the general processes involved. You'll need to study the manuals and documentation that came with *FilterMeister* and also be sure to check out the demo codes provided.

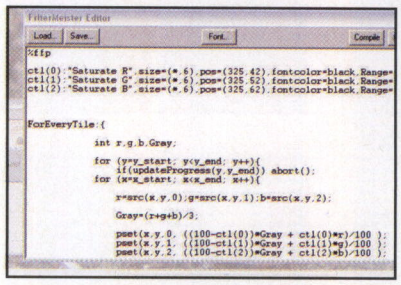


2 Locate where you installed *FilterMeister* and you'll find sub-folders containing more example source codes. Let's take a look at a few of the demos that will be useful in helping you get started. Open TabStyleDemo.ffp to learn how to create tabbed pages, a very useful feature.

3 Next take a look at the file called Test-ControlsAndBorders-4.ffp, which is an ideal complement to the tabs example and will provide you with a visual reference to many of *FilterMeister's* controls and features. This is probably one of the best demos for new users.



4 As we have briefly covered some colour-modification code already, it's worth examining the RGB_to_HSL_and_back.ffp example. This will show you more advanced coding techniques for dealing with hue, saturation and lightness editing. Another good one to study.



5 Following on from this, you should look at the SaturateRGB.ffp file for more ideas on editing the individual red, green and blue channel values. Although colour-editing may seem at the basic end of programming, it'll give you good grounding if you learn and understand the principles involved.

6 And that's it. There is a lot more to learn so it's worth signing up for the official mailing list, where you'll get the opportunity to share ideas with other filter developers. Go to **[w]** http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FMML for more info. **ca-p**

COMPUTER arts projects INTERACTIVE

CD HIGHLIGHTS

22 Richard Rosenman filters
Check out this range of fantastic *Photoshop* filters including 3DSphereGen, DiffuseGlow, Squarify, GridGenerator and more.

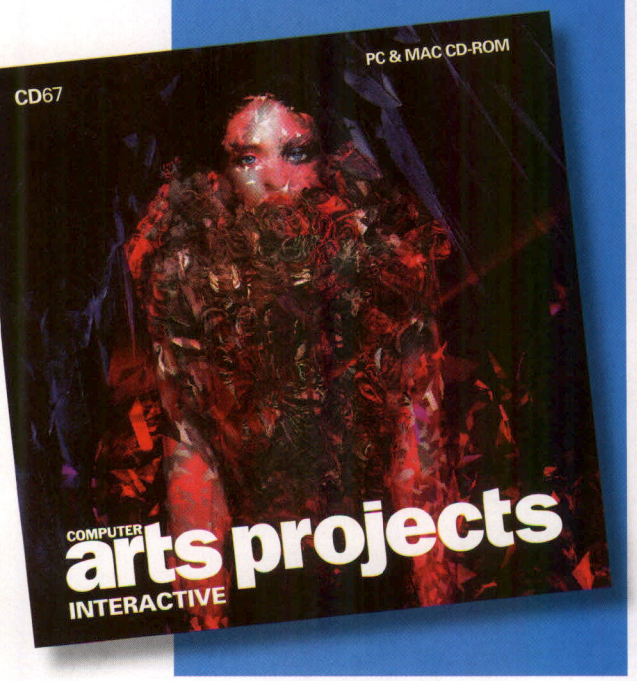
2 FREE Iridius actions
This month, we bring you two superb actions from *Photoshop* guru Terry Steeley...

500 Andrews filters
Check out this huge collection of filter effects from our friends at graphicxtras.com.

1,270 Cybia brushes
A massive selection of brushes from Cybia. See our tutorial beginning on page 90.

13 Redfield plug-ins
Create realistic texture effects with these 13 *Photoshop* plug-ins from Redfield.

Tutorial files
In the 'Tutorial files' folder on the CD, you'll find the files you need to complete this month's tutorials.



FILTERS & EFFECTS

This month we bring you a massive *Photoshop* effects resource

Huge range of filters, brushes and actions

Over 1,500 filter effects, actions and brushes on your CD...

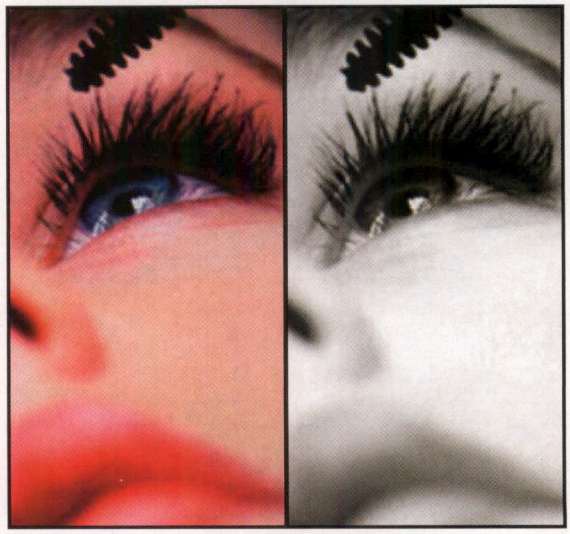
This month, we bring you a comprehensive resource of filters, plug-ins, actions, brushes and more, all aimed at making your effects better and your workflow easier.

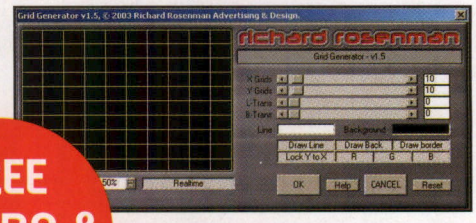
First up are 22 Richard Rosenman filters. These filters will help you generate all kinds of amazing effects including 3D spheres, grids and diffuse glows. The collection includes 3DSphereGen, DiffuseGlow, GridGenerator and PortablePixmap.

Next we have 500 filters from graphicxtras.com. These will help you create all manner of gradients, blurs, patterns, smears and noise effects.

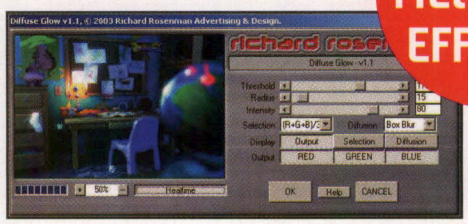
Then, we have a massive 1,270 Cybia brushes. This is a sample set taken from the company's range of brushes — check them out at **[w]** www.cybia.co.uk.

There's also a huge range of demos on your CD. See opposite for details...





FREE FILTERS & EFFECTS



More info... www.iridius.net, www.graphicxtras.com, www.cybia.co.uk

Also on the CD...

You'll find the source files you need to follow this month's filters and effects tutorials in the Software/Tutorial files folder on your CD. See individual tutorials for specific file locations.

Filter & plug-in demos

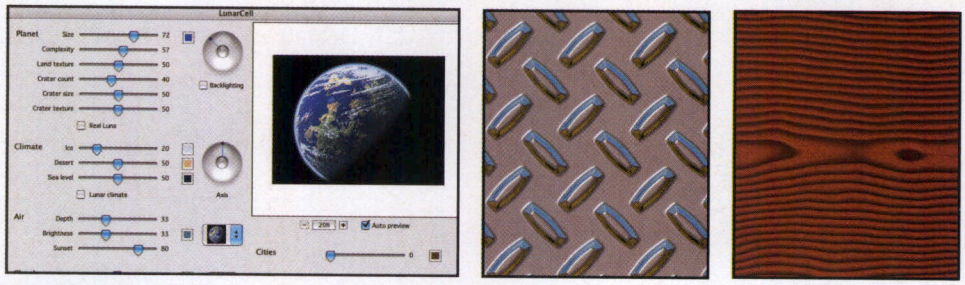
Take these fantastic plug-ins for a test-drive with these fully-working demos...

As well as an abundance of free effects, filters, actions and brushes, we bring you a wide range of plug-in demos to try out.

We have the latest demos from Alien Skin software – including Eye Candy textures, ImageDoctor and Xenofex. Alien Skin is known for its crazy effects, and here's your chance to try them out.

There are also 36 Flaming Pear plug-ins for you to try out, including the massively popular SolarCell and LunarCell – enabling you to create amazing suns and moons directly within *Photoshop*.

In addition, we bring you 13 Redfield plug-ins, all of which will generate some pretty cool texture effects.



More info... www.alienskin.com, www.flamingpear.com, www.redfieldplugins.com

Expert video training

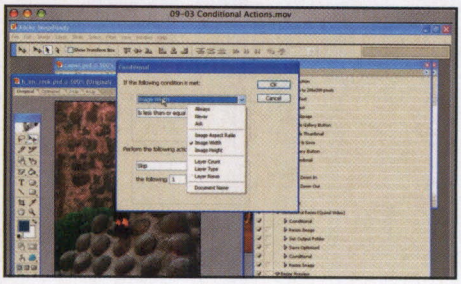
Learn the power of *Photoshop* scripting with this video tutorial...

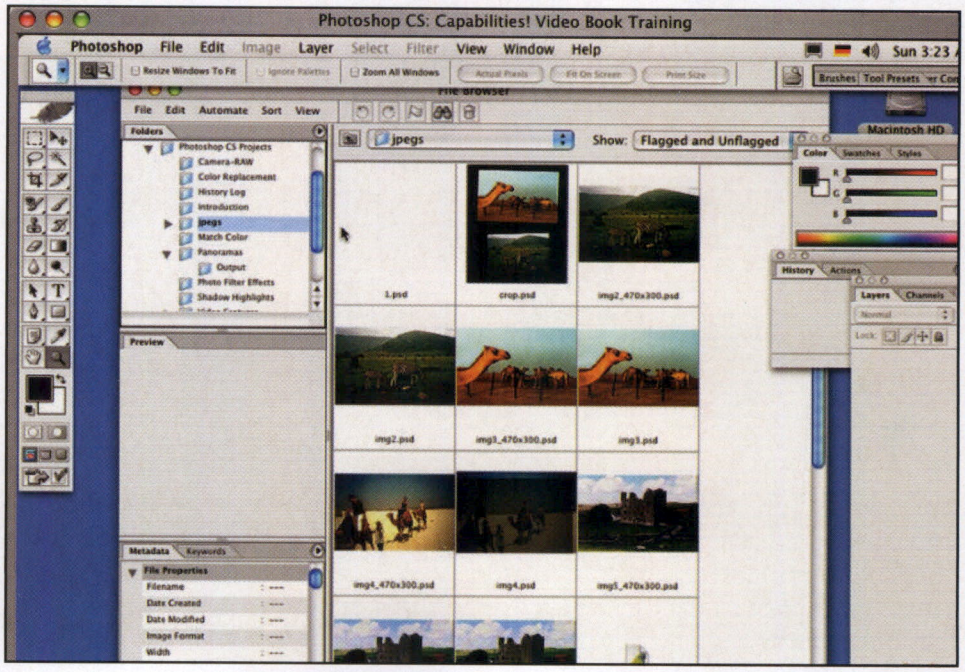
More info... www.quixelvideo.com

We've teamed up with Quixel Video to bring you a chapter from its latest *Photoshop CS* video training DVD. This expert training will teach you how to harness the power of *Photoshop's* scripting and automation features – making it easy for you to quickly repeat common effects, or batch-process a number of images.

The full DVD costs £80 and contains over 20 hours of video training on both *Photoshop* and *ImageReady CS*. The DVD includes all the source files you need to work through the projects.

For more information on this DVD and Quixel Video's other range of training products see **[w]** www.quixelvideo.com **ca-p**





On your CD...

Software and resources

- 22 Richard Rosenman plug-in filters
- FilterMeister beta
- 2 Iridius actions
- 500 filters from Graphicxtras.com
- 13 Redfield plug-ins
- 1270 Cybia brushes
- Alien Skin demos
- 36 Flaming Pear demos

Video tutorials

Photoshop scripting video training from Quixel.

Tutorial files

All the files you need to follow this month's tutorials.

CINEMA 4D
Release 9
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StartUp+	200MB	10	5GB	£7.99
Business	500MB	25	10GB	£13.99
Business+	700MB	50	15GB	£16.99
Enterprise	1GB	100	20GB	£21.99
Enterprise+	1.5GB	200	30GB	£24.99

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- ✔ NO usage restrictions
- ✔ NO Internet call charges
- ✔ Always-on connection

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PACKAGE	SPEED	CONTENTION	PCM
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Home1000	1Mbps	50:1	£31.99
Office500	512Kbps	20:1	£32.99
Office1000	1Mbps	20:1	£48.99
Office2000	2Mbps	20:1	£62.99

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